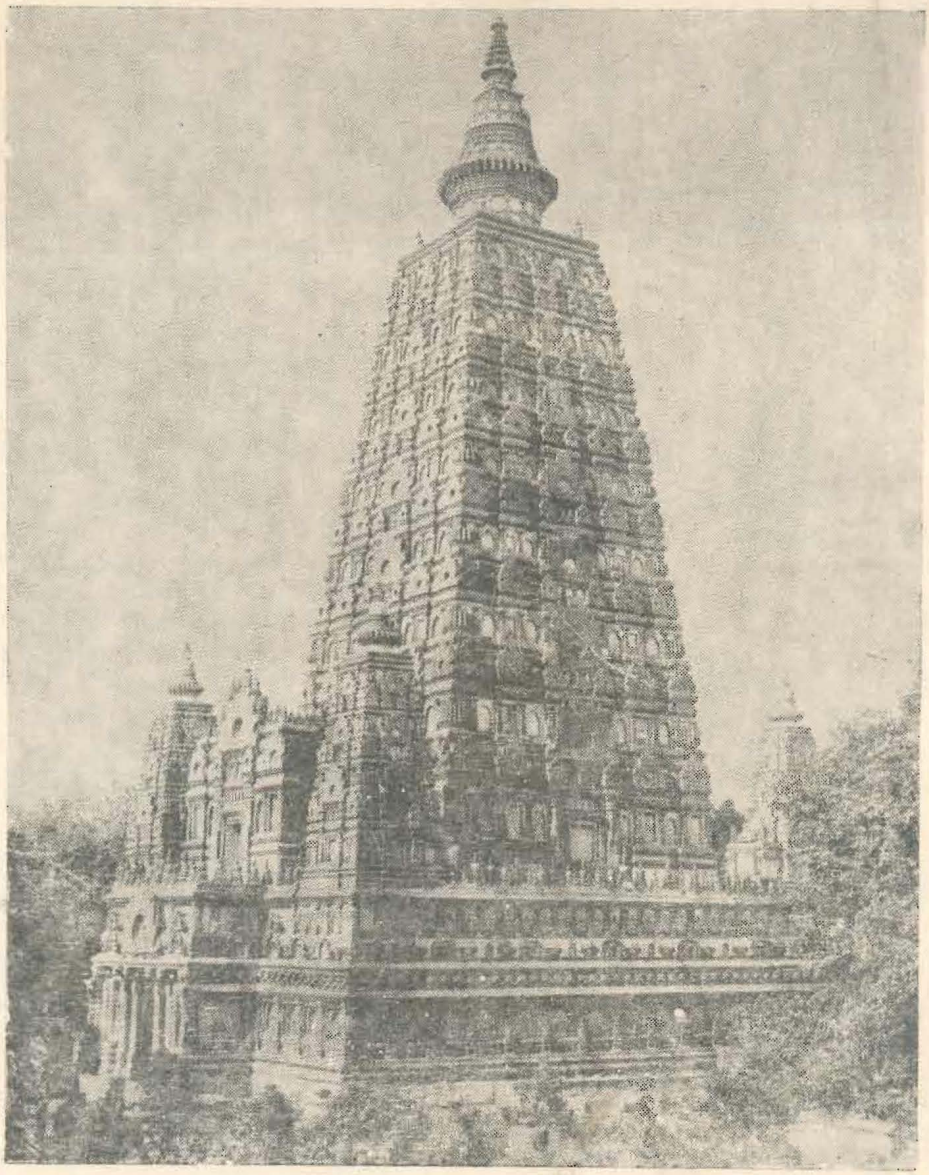
ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS OF BODHGAYA



DR. ABDUL QUDDOOS ANSARI

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Archaeological Remains of Bodhgaya

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PREFACE

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A Q. Ansari

ABBREVIATION

ASI, Ec.	:	*Archaealogical Survey of India*, Eastern Circle Report.
ASR.	:	*Archaeological Survey of India*, Report.
BODG.	:	*Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers.*
CASR.	:	*Cunningham, Archaeological Survey*, Report.
CII.	:	*Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.*
EI.	:	*Epigraphia Indica.*
IC.	:	*Indian Culture.*
Ind. Ant.	:	*Indian Antiquity.*
JAS.	:	*Journal of the Asiatic Society*, Calcutta.
JASB.	:	*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta.
Jat.	:	*Jātaka Stories.*
JBBRAS.	:	*Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.*
JBRS.	:	*Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, Patna.
JBROS.	:	*Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society.*
JISOA.	:	*Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art.*
JPASB.	:	*Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.*
JRAS.	:	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.*
MASI.	:	*Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India.*

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1

INTRODUCTION

Bodhgaya is one of the famous and sacred places of the world, and in the past it was the most significant cultural centre of Buddhism. It was here that Buddha achieved enlightenment and from where the doctrines of later Buddhism spread to South-East Asia and the Far-East. Therefore, it is a name to conjure within the history of human thought and culture. Bodhgaya (Long. 24°42′N. Lat. 85° 0′ E) is situated on the left or western bank of a river, variously named as the *Falgu*, *Neranjana* or *Lilanjana* 13 Kilometres south of the district town of Gaya in Bihar. It is connected with the National Highway *No.* 2[8] by an 18 Km. long road at Dobhi and by a 15 Km. long road at Gaya town and is now on the Air map of India. It experiences tropical monsoon type of climate. Summers (40 6°C) are hot and winters (8.9°C) are cold and the rainy season lasts for about three months.

In early Vedic and Buddhist period South-West Bihar was known by the name of Magadha. Some Vedic texts narrate it as *Kikata* too. We do not exactly know how these words originated or what they signify. The author of the *Vāyū Pūrāna* identified *Kikata* with Magadha, while its commentator identified with Gaya only. The *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* often refer to Magadha, even Aśoka also used the word Magadha in one of his inscriptions[1]

mentioning himself as king of this land. However, the people of this locality and its adjoining tract still call it 'Magah', which is definitely a Prakritised form of Magadha. In modern times Magah is identified with the erstwhile district of Patna and Gaya including the northern fringe of the Hazaribagh district.

Bodhgaya occupies a unique place in the evolution and development of ancient Indian culture and civilization. It had played an important role in the emergence of temple and monasteries. Nearly one Kilometer south of the present Mahabodhi temple there is a village named Urel, representing the ancient village Uruvela or Urūvilwa, where the eldest of the three Kasyapa brothers, the most famous sages of Buddha's time, is said to have lived. The name Uruvela, has been variously derived by Cunningham from the sandy wastes of the river or from the close by forest of Bel trees. The Ceylonese chronicles, the *Mahāvaṁsa*, the *Lalitāvistara*, and other Buddhist texts abound in referrences to *Urūvelā* as the place intimately associated with the events of Buddha's life just before his achievement of perfect wisdom under the famous Bodhi tree. The sacred place of the tree may, therefore, have been known originally from the village of *Urūvelā* untill it acquired a separate name for itself. Such a name later on was variously known as *Bodhi*, *Mahābodhi* or *Buddha-Gaya*[2]. The term Bodhi was probably in common use in the time of Aśoka and in many later inscriptions the place is referred to as Mahābodhi. The name Buddha-Gaya occurs first in an apocryphal inscription of *Amaradeva*, and in *Akbar's* time it may have been the more commonly used name to distinguish it from Gaya which had by then grown to considerable sanctity and importance after the decline of Buddhism. *Abūl Fazal* mentions the latter place as *Brāhma-Gaya*, obviously to distinguish it from the holy site of Buddhism.

The same term *Buddha-Gaya* is now indicated in the modern name of Bodh-Gaya.

The archaeological investigations and recent researches clearly demonstrate that nearly each village of this region lies on an ancient mound or ruins, which was thickly populated in the sixth century B.C. when the process of political and cultural unification of India began under the banner of the Magadhan power.

Although Buchaon Hamilton, Major Kittoe, R. L. Mitra, James Fergusson, B. M. Barua and others have done preliminary work earlier, the beginning of archaeological operation in and around Bodhgaya, as represented by extensive survey and partial excaation, was actually initiated by Sir Alexander Cunningham in 1861. Bodhgaya was the first place from where Cunningham started his survey. The work of Cunningham provide a solid basis for archaeological operations and helped in lying the foundation of the historical archaeology in Bihar. However, Pre-historic and Proto-historic and archaeology in Bodhgaya began in the post independence era. As a result of archaeological investigations, several ancient sites such as Bodhgaya, Bakraur, Mocharin, Dhungeshwari (Dhongra-hill), Sangharām monastery (Amar Sinha's fort), Tārādih, Pachhatti and Amwāṇ have been brought to light. Of these, Bakraur, Amar Sinha's fort and Tārādih have scientifically been excavated, which provide fresh materials. Although some of these reports have been published, unfortunately there are several lacunas in them. They neither provide stratigraphy nor chronology of Bodhgaya, and furthermore they are almost silent in context of artistic, architectural and iconographic features of the region. Recently D. K. Barua's *Buddha-Gaya Temple : Its History* has been published in which the author has tried to throw light on Buddha-Gaya temple and its history on the basis of

archaeological finds. Though this work is appreciable, but Barua has concentrated his study only on the Mahabodhi temple, and significantly it yields nothing about the cultural sequences of the region. Hence here a fresh study of the unknown past of Bodhgaya is made, the incorporating the latest finds discovered from this and neighbouring areas. For convinence the work has been divided into the six chapters.

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GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT

Physiographically, Bodhgaya is situated in the territorial zone between the Gangetic plain in the north and the Chotanagpur plateau in the south. It represented a place of cultural transition and played an important role in the evolution and development of early Indian culture.

The land surface is uneven and innumerable mountain like land formations are to be seen. The un-dulating land surface is compound of various types of soil. The soil available in the zone are red, black, and yellow silt. In the neighbourhood of the rivers, sand deposits too are to be seen. The red as well as black soil are found to be mixed with kankars. Soil types in question are fairly hard during the dry season while absolutely wet during the rains. The moisture becomes available in the soil and all sorts of green grass, weeds, etc. are found to grow. Barley plants took their birth during the rains. Weeds and other green grass are wither away under the scorching heat of the sun, while Barley plant because of their resistance capacity survive even during the dry season.

From a close study of the geographical evidences it would appear that among the thick forests, the sacred river Phalgu had been flowing, and the principal

localities of this region were settled on both the sides of the river. As Hiuen-Tsang has suggested that Uruvela extended north-east 14 or 15 li atleast from the spot of the Bodhi-tree and it was on the eastern bank of the river Phalgu as far as the Pragbodhi hill (Polo-ki-Pu-Ti) which he reached by crossing the Phalgu river from near the base of the *Gayā Śīrsa* hill.[1] On the southern side it was outskirted by an extensive forest tracts known as Vanka Janapada which was inhabited by an aboriginal people, a race of hunters. From the topographical point of view this Jungle tract may be identified with the modern Hazaribagh district, and their savage hunters most probably were no other than the forefather of the present Santats, Oraons and Mundas who inhabit this region.[2] However, this tract came into prominence during Maurya and post-Mauryan period.

From topography of the Chinese pilgrims, we are able to know many sites of the region which had been visited by Buddha. Important amongst them are Uruvela, Dhongra hill (some 3 Kms from the Great temple of Bodhgaya), a cave marks the place on the Pragbodhi mountain, Sujata-Kutir or Senapatigama (present Bakraur), Mocharin (a place which is still worshipped by the pilgrims, and the spot where Buddha was sheltered by the snake king Muchlinda). In spite of these, there aroused some other tracts too in both the sides of the same river.

It is interesting to note that the Neranjara or Niranjana was not the Phalgu river. In the Pali canonical texts the two rivers have been mentioned as being quite distinct from each other, though some scholars believe that the river Niranjana itself was known as Phalgu. From the *Ūdāna* text we known that the Jātilās of Gaya proper bathed in the Phālgu river[3] where as the *Mahāvagga* mentions the Jātilās of Uruvela bathing in a different river i.e., Nīranjana.[4]

The Phalgu river arises out of the union of the two rivers viz., Lilājan and Mohāna, which originated from the

high lands of Chotānāgpur. These rivers united roughly two kilometers away from Bodhgaya and then combined streams flow under the name of the Phalgu, and most of the villages were established on both the banks of this river.[5] Again this river has been flowing in northward direction and near the Barabar-hill it bi-furcates into two branches. This rivar falls into the Ganga near Surajagurha in the Monghyr district.

Bodhgaya is essentially a rural area and majority of the population are engaged in agriculture. The regions, under it, has much land which has neither been under cultivation nor could it be done to any advantage. At places, boulder are found scattered in the field hence they are not profitable to soil. Land with silt deposit are very fertile. A part of the land comes under cultivation during the dry season. A red soil on the surface is very common in this area, and is chiefly confined to some poor sandy lands. But in a few parts there is a yellowish clay soil. which is very productive when properly supplied with water. It often contains calcareous modules, which is chiefly found on the banks of the Phalgu and its adjoing areas. The prevailing soil is of an ash colour, more or less inching to brown, and partly clay and partly mixed. The clay is most commonly called 'Kewal', and on the whole it is reckoned lest in the present area of this region.

Cultivation has been going on through out the whole district of Gaya, and they watered by artificial irrigation canals; but it does not cover up more than 1/5 part of the whole land. Though the rainfall is scenty, water is stored in the Ahars; the system which was owned by the early Indians to store water that came from the hill stremes.

The agriculture prosperity of Gaya and Bodhgaya regions depend in an unique degree on an extensive system

of artificial irrigation. Her people are dependent on methods of irrigation which have been practised from time immemorial. The indigenous system is the outcome of the natural conditions and physicial configuration of the country, and has been evolved to meet the abstacles which they placed in the way of cultivation. The whole district is characterised by a seanty rainfall, a rapid slope-off which the water quickly runs, and a soil, which, is either a stiff clay or a loose sand, are equally unretentive of moisture.

Bodhgaya and Gaya is bounded on the aourh by the high lands of the Chhotanagpur plateau and the spurs which project from it, and along the northern boundary it marches with the low-lying plains of the Patna district. The general slope is accordingly from south to north towards the Gangetic valley, and it is comparatively rapid—the average fall in northwards being about 6 to 4 feet in tae mile. A number of wide and narrow rivers debouch from these southern hills and intersect the area. They flow, across it, from south, started around Chhotanagpur and Hazaribagh forests and mountains, and ends to north in Patna district, and, their beds are so sandy that the water is rapidly carried through the sands. In order to use its water, long narrow artifical canals called 'Pana' are led off from the rivers to carry the water to the fields for the cultivation of the rice crops on which the people almost entirely depends. The water was also impounded in extensive reservoirs, called 'ahar'. In the cold weather when the 'ahar' dry up, and '*pans*' no longer contain water the people can fall back on their well; and thus the crops are protected from failure through out the year.

The other system of irrigation which are utilised after finishing storage system is known as *Lāthā Kūnrī* or level and bucket; that water basket is called 'Chanr' or 'sair' and the 'Karin' or wooden canoe—shaped lift. Mostly these irrigational methods are applied for kharif crops.

Our sources present a detailed account of the agricul-process persued by the farmers in early period. It is practically the same as practised in the modern villages of the area. They refer to ploughing the fields, pulling up of the weeds, reaping the crops, arranging them in bundles, getting them trodden. picking the strow, removing the choff, winning the garnering the harvest as the successive stages of the process of agriculture. We are told of heavy ploughs drown by oxen.

Like present time the main crop of Gaya and Bodhgaya was paddy[6], of which several varieties were cultivated. Sāli, Vīhī, or Vrīhi, barley (yava), Sasamum (tīla), beans (mase), wheat (godhūns), pulses (Khalvat, etc; all of which seem to have been cultivated in this region. It also appears that, besides a few acres of land under the poor farmers, there were many great land holdings, hundreds of acres of land were owned by the wealthy cultivators. According to *Sūtta-Nipatta*, the Brahmana Kashi Bhardwaja needed 500 ploughs for ploughing his plot of land.

Though agriculture was the main-stay of the people, yet they had cattle-breeding which formed the nucleus of the economic persuits of the peasantry. Cattle served not only as an aid to agriculture but it also provided food in the form of milk, curd and butter etc. In addition to cattle, horses, goats and rams seems to have been the main domestic animals of this region. Moreover cattle breeding seems to have been the main occupation of the rural population, both pastrol and agricultural.

Later on, when feudal system came in to existence usually tenants pay a part of his crops to the chief or feudal lords in lieu of money rent, and village officials, such as carpenter, back smith, barber, washerman and patwari, are generally paid in kind at a fixed rate. Every house holders has his grain store, by which he procures his luxuries

and other necessities in times of plenty, or averts famine after unfavourable season.

Density of population of this region, is determined largely on the physical characteristics of the two tracts, that is north and south. The land of the southern area is imperfectly irrigated and comparatively barron, where a large part is still under Jungle (started from southern boundry of Bodhgaya i.e. Barachatti and Hazārībāgh tracts). In this region the population is very sparse, not rising to more than 278 to the square mile.[7] In northwards where the soil is more fertile and a considerable area is protected from draught by an extensive system of artificial irrigation, the population is fairly dense and the number of persons to the square mile is more than double. Statistics of the population appended at the end shows that the pressure of the people on the land is greatest in the highly cultivated tract.

Every year, when agricultural season is over, a large numbers of people leave the area in search of works, and most of them return at the end of the hot weather to participate in the agricultural operations which commence with the break of the monsoon. Other find their way to metropolitan towns where there is a demand to serve as 'darwan' cook, peon etc. It appears from the enquiries of the year 1888 that from some villages 0.7% of the population were absent from their homes. The complaints of plague is also reported from this region which is considered a major factor for less population.[8]

The people of the region had an easy access to the market centres by travelling on the kaccha and pitch road. The communication facilities have its effects upon the controlling of prices which resulted in the material prosperity of the people.

The traders of the region visited the foreign maeket by means of land and sea routes. There are evidences which

indicate that great carvans passed east and west through Gaya. The classical writers mention carvan routes[9] passing directly from Patna to the Persian gulf. Even Iran was directly linked up with Gaya (Magadha) by means of land route. Eratosthenes was well acquainted with the Royal Road to Pataliputra.

The trade routes facilitated the island commerce to a great extent; and the Pali works are full of such accounts. One such road linked Sarvasti and Rajagriha passing through many places like Kapilvastu, Kusinara, Pava, Vaisali, Pataliputra and Nalanda. The road continued further to Gaya and met the another route leading to Varanasi. *Vīnaya Pītaka* mentions a high way between Vārānasī and Rājagrīha through Gaya. Later on, many foreign travellers by adopting this route visited Nalanda Rājgir, Gaya and Bodhgaya. This fact has been corroborated by the accounts of the Chinese travellers too.

The varnacular current over the whole region is the dialect of Bihari Hindi, known as Magahi. It is spoken properly in Magadha, which roughly correspond to the present day district of Patna and North Gaya. It seems that this languages is not confined to this region only; rather it is also spoken outside Gaya region. Like Maithilī, it has a complex system of verbal conjugation; but the principal difference between the two dialects is that Maithilī has been under the influence of the learned Brahmanas, while Magahi is the language of the people who had been dubbed boors since Vedic times. The Muslims, Kayastha and Brahmanas used to speak the Awadhi dialect of Eastern Hindi in this areas as well as elsewhere in Bihar.

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3

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The antiquity of Bodhgaya is shrouded in descurity. The site where Gauttama, the prince of the Sākya clan, attained supreme Wisdom (enlightenment or *bodhī* or *Śām bodhī*) and became Buddha, came to be known as Buddha-Gaya. The place was also known as *Śāmbodhī* in early period as is evident from the inscriptions of Asoka who visited this sacred site when he was anointed for ten years.

The name of Bodhgaya do not occur in the *Vedās* but is mentioned in later works like the *Rāmāyana*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Samhitā* and the religious codes of Atri, Vāśistha and Yajñavālkya, Among the sacred sites in Gaya-Kshetra, as enumerated in the *Gaya-Mahātmaya* section of the *Vāyū-Pūrāna* is mentioned *Dharmaranyr*[1] which, as its name implies, constituted a jungle tract and may be identified, at least in part, with what the Buddhists call the forest of *Urūvelā* or *Uruvilva* (Bodh-Gaya).[2] It represents a sanctified boundary inside which is enshrined the image of *Dharmeśvara* or Buddha and the Bo-tree (Asvatha) of world-wide fame.[3] The enshrinement of the image of the *Buddha-Dharmeśvara* and the presence of the famous Bo-tree suffice to indicate that the *Dharmāranya* of the *Gaya Mahātmya* is at least in part, the secred site, the precincts of the Bodh-gaya temple representing the Jungle of Uruvela or Uruvilva of the Buddhist literature.[4] And the Bodhidrūma Aśvatha of the *Vāyū-Pūrāna* is undoubtedly the famous *Pipala* tree at

Bodhgaya at the foot of which lord Buddha attained enlighenment or Buddhahood.

Magadha came into prominence in the sixth century B.C., and it included Patna, Gaya, Bodhgaya and parts of Hazāribagh. Bodhgaya formed a part of great political entity of Magadh, and from the time of Aśoka, Bodhgaya came to acquire special significance. Aśoka's love for Buddhism and Bodhi tree roused up zealousy and revengeful spirit in the heart of his second queen Tishyarakshita who had cut down the Bodhi tree. It is said that the tree was miraculously brought to life, the two Bharhut carvings represent the Bodhi tree and an Asokan pillar surmounted by an elephant. The Barabar and Nagarjuni Hill caves contain Mauryan Inscriptions and are dedicated to the Ajivikas by Aśoka and his grand son[5] Dasharatha. These caves are the earliest examples of cave architecture of Bihar. These caves are exeavated in the hardest granite with infinite care, and the interior surface are lurnished like glass. The Sitamarhi caves are (Dist. Nawada) similar to that of Barabar caves and contains several sculptures. But the Śuṅga aculptures at Bodhgaya have a place of lasting interest in the history of Indian Art.

Kharavela of Kalinga took advantage of the fluid political situation of Magahda and invaded the area. He led an expedition into Gorthagiri (Brabar Hill)) and defeated the king of Magadha. The Mitras appear to have been connected with Bodhgaya as their names appear on the stone railings of Bodhgaya. Whether the Mitras were connected with the Sungas or were independent ruling dynasties, it is difficult to say in the present state of our knowledge. We have the name of Kaushikiputra Indragni Mitra, Brahmani Mitra and others. The name of Kurangi, wife of Indragni Mitra, has been inscribed as a donor of the fifteen of the Surviving pillars and the two coping pieces of the old stone railing. Her munificence was responsible for the erection

of the old sand stone railing, the old diamond throne and Jewel walk shrine. The name of Sirima occurs with that of Kurangi as a joint donor of two of the surviving coping pieces of the sand stone railing. Nāgadevi, wife of Brahmani-Mitras also erected a Yaksa pillar. Bodhgaya formed a part of the Kushana empire. According to Cunningham, Huvishka furnished funds, for the building of Mahabodhi.

Under the Imperial Guptas, Bodhgaya attained prominence. In one of the inscriptions of Samudra Gupta (the so-called spurious Gaya copper plate was issued from Ayodhyā), Gaya is mentioned as a Vishya. It was an administrative headquarter under the Guptas. During his reign Mahanaman had installed an image of Lord Buddha with inscription and it was done with the permission of the king Samudragupta.[6] Samudragupta is famous in the history of Gaya and Bodhgaya for the exchange of letters between him and Meghavarmana of Ceylon (c. 330 A.D.). The king of Ceylon had sent two monks and his brother to pay homage to the Vajrasana and also to visit the monastery built by Aśoka when on their return they complained that they could not stay in confort.[7] Meghavarmana decided to found a monastery at Bodhgaya.

Meghavarmana dispatched a mission to Samudragupta with invaluable gifts and requested for permission to found a monastery at Bodhgaya. The permission was granted. However, a splendid convent known as Mahabodhi Sangharama was constructed to the north of the Bodhi tree. When Hiuen-Tsang visited this monastery in the seventh century A.D., it was occupied by a thousand monks of the Sthavira school of Mahayana sect.

Dated seulptures of the Gupta peeiod have been noticed from Gaya and two figures of Buddha, standing and the other sitting, from Bodhgaya are supposed to be earliest dated sculptures of the Gupta period (corresponding to A.D. 383) and stylistically belong to the Mathura school of Art

of the earliest centuries. Thirteen inscriptions belonging to the period between A.D. 100 and 400 are set-forth in a chronological order and these mark some distint stages in the growth and development of the life of the Buddhist holy land. According to Fa-Hien the three monasteries[8] at Bodhgaya were surrounded by Jungles and the city was empty and desolate. Towards the last day of the days of the Gupta rule some of the *Kūmāramātyas* seem to have asserted their independence as we find Kumaramatya Mahārājā Nandana issuing a land grant in Gaya district in his own right. The Maukharia were also ruling at Gaya and Bodhgaya as feudatories of the Guptas but they also asserted their independence.[9]

The Maukharis, exercised their suzerainty up to this Ksetra. Three Maukhari inscriptions in the Barabar and Nagarjuni Hills, in the Lomesh-Rishi and Gopika caves are important for the study of the contemporary history. These inscriptions supply us with the name of Yajna Varmana, Shardulavarmana and Anantavarmana. The latter installed the image of Krishna in the Brabar cave near Gaya. He also set up images of Bhutapati (Shira), Parvati (Devi) and Katyayani in Barabar and Nagarjuni Hill Caves. One of these three inscriptions refers to a temple of Siddheswara which is still *in situ* on the the Barabar peak. It seems that Maukhari's ruled over Gaya and Bodhgaya first as feudatories[10] of the Guptas, and later as independent rulers.

Whether all the Buddha images seen by Fa-Hian at Bodhgaya exist now or not are still a matter of conjecture. But there is one image which may be safely relegated to the later Kushāṇa age or early Gupta age. In the opinion of Cunningham "The earliest figure of Buddha which has yet been found at Mahabodhi."[11] It bears an inscription of four lines on its pedestal which is written in the Kushana style.[12] The Sanskrit of its text is not entirely free from such Prakrit form as *Upasikaya, Achadhammasahoya,* and *mata-*

Pituna. The image was installed in Samvat 65 (143 A.D.). The work of installation was done by a Buddhist monk with the aid of a Buddhist lay woman named Achadhamma. Presently this statue is in Indian Museum at Calcutta. However the date of this Buddha image is placed in early Gupta or the post-Kushana's period. At the time of Fa-Hien's visit the great temple at Bodhgaya had not then come into existence, and the sacred area with the growing shrines presented but a simple and dacent show.[13]

Two and a half centuries later Hiuen-Tsang visited the place and left a vivid account of the holy site including its immediate and distant surroundings, which is at once full of details excelling in the wealth of variety verging almost on clumsiness. The picture presented by him is, for all practical purposes, the same as that which we can imagine to ourselves with the aid of all that we may still see on the sacred area of the Bo-tree. The pilgrim says, "It is sarrounded by brick-wall of considerable height, steep and strong. It is long from east to west and short from North to south. It is about 5000 (? 1500) paces around. Rare trees with their renowed flowers connect their shade and cast their shadows, the dedicate 'She herb' (? kush) and different sherbs earpet the soil. The principal gate open to the east, opposite the Niranjana river. The southern gate adjoins a great flowery bank. The western side is blocked up and difficult of access. The northern gate opens into the great Samgharama; Within the surrounding wall the sacred traces touch one another in all directions. Here there are stopas in another place *vihāras* (temples). The kings, princes and great personages throughout all Jumbudvipa (India) who have accepted the bequeathed teaching as handed down to them have erected monuments."[14]

Hiuen-tsang has left a vivid description of not only the high wall of stone, the old stone-railing encircling the Bo-tree[15] and the Jewel-walk-shrine to the north of the Bo[16],

but also of the great temple at Bodhgaya.[17] Among other notable objects noticed by the great Chinese pilgrim, the figures of two Mahayana dieties, Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva and Maitreya Bodhisattva instaled in the niches like chambers to the right and left of the outer gate of the Bodhgaya temple deserve special mention.[18]

At the time of Hiuen-Tsang's visit the Mahābodhi Sangharama entertained many Buddhist priests of Ceylon. To the South of the Bo-tree 10 li or so, the sacred traces were so numerous that they could not be each named. Every year when the Bhiksus brokeup their early rest of the rains, the votaries of Buddhism came here from every quarter in thousands and myriads, and during seven days and nights they scattered flowers, burned incense, and sounded music as they wandered through the Buddhist Holy Land and paid their worship and presented their offerings.[19] At this season of the year they visited also the Prāgbodhi (Bhongeshwari) hill for the purposes of making religious offerings to the faithful, and departed after stopping there for one night.[20] It appears from Hiuen-Tsang,[21] account as if the two tracts of Nadi and Uruvela came under the sole sway of Buddhism.

Hiuen-Tsang credits a Brahmin Votary of Siva-Maheśvara with the costly erection of the Bodhgaya temple and his younger brother with the excavation of the tank with a flower bank on the south side of the great shrine, now known by the name of *Būddhokhar* or *Buddhā-Pokhar*.[22] The Buddha image enshrined in the main hall of worship is praised as the handi work of a skilled Brahmin artist employed by the builder of the great temples.[23] It is said that a pious Brahmin obeyed just a holy communication from his diety Śiva-Maheśvara, the Lord of the Himālyan mountain, in erecting this temple to the Buddhas.[24] The object of the undertaking was primarily for the fulfilment of a wordly desire, namely, his appointment to the post of minister to a

reigning king. His wish was duly fulfilled, although the account is silent over the name of the king.[25] While Hiuen-Tsang praises this temple as a most laudable erection of devotional pity of the saivite Brahmin minister, he is reticent as to the acts of destruction necessiated by the work of construction of the great shrine. In a some what different connection he mentions a few instances of destruction. Such as the demolition of certain religious structure miscalled convents and the cutting down of the Bo-tree, all of which are alleged to have been prepetrated as unholy acts of desecration by the wicked king Sasanka of Bengal through envy since he happened to be a believer in heresy, a staunch supporter of the religion of Śiva-Maheśvara.[26] In this context Chinese pilgrim says, "Sasanka Raja (She-shang-kia) being a believer in heresy, slanderod the religion of Buddha, and through envy destroyed the what so ealled convents and cut down the Bodhi tree, digging it up to the very springs of the earth; But yet he did not get to the bottom of the roots. Then he burnt it with fire and sprinkled it with the juice of the sugar-cane, desiring to destory it entirely, and not have a trace of it behind.[27]

In the same connection he has extalled Purnavarma (Pula-na-fa-mo), the king of Magadha, as the 'last of the race of Asoka-raja' who deeply grievede that destruction of the Bo-tree, tried successfully, some months after the tragic and sudden death of Sasanka, to bring the Bo-tree back to life, enabling it to grow a new from the roots that had yet remained after teathing them with the milk of thousand cows.[28] And when it grew to the height of some then feet, fearing lest it should be again cut down, "he surrounded it with a wall of stone some 24 feet high" which was later found encircled by this Chinese pilgrim.

Śasanka has been castgated for his being anti-Buddist also forburning the Bodhi tree. Barua does not agree to this view and suggests that it was under sasanka's auspices

that the Buddhist shrine was built at Bodhgaya and that he has been blackmailed by Hiuen-Tsang. Barua further does not agree with the views of Chiang-Hsia-Pias who credists Asoka with the contruction of the temple. Chiang's assertion is supported by a Burmese inscription. Hiuen-Tsang holds a view that Asoka-first built a small vihara Barua suggests that the temple came into existence after Fahian and before Hiuen-Tsang. Though the issue is contusing, the inscriptions from the precints of the Mahabodhi set forth in a chronological order (between A.D. 100 and 400) mark the stages in the growth and development of Mahabodhi. Hiuen-Tsang admits that a Brahmana devotees of Śiva-Maheśvara was the builder of the Mahabodhi vihara. According to Barua, that Brahmna was the minister of Śaśanka.[30] Even the sculptor was a Brahmana.

Further Hiuen-Tsang has given in his account that he saw stupas erected by Aśoka at Pragbodhi. Bodhgaya temple was surrounded by a vast number of temples, stupas and minor shrines. Bodhi trees was visited on each anniversary of the *Nirvāna* day by the prince of different countries and by pious multitudes numbering tens of thousands.[31] There was a splendid stupa at Bakraur (The stupa was excavated by the Archaeological Survey of India).

Harśa

Gaya played in prominent role in the history of Bihar under the later Guptas of Magadha whose founder Adityasena revived the glory of Magadha once again and extended his authority up to the shores of the Sea. He was the greatest king of his time (A.D. 655-680). The earliest record of this family is the Aspsad Inscription, discovered from the present district of Nawada. Besides being an important source of later Guptas it is ranked as one of the best *Kavyas*. Adityasena's undisputed sovereignty in eastern and southern Bihar is further proved by a number of inscriptions from other parts of Bihar like Mandar and Vaidyanatha.

He caused the construction of a big temple of Visnu. A *Rāmāyana* stucco panel[32] has been discovered at Apsadh. His wife also got a tank excavated of Mandar.

The later Guptas seem to have been supplanted by the Palas in Bodhgaya. Though the Palas themselves were Buddhists, they were tolerant to other sects and we have at Gaya the conglomeration of various religions sects like śaivism, Vaisnavism etc. Princes, Nobles, officials and even ordinary men continued to visit Bodhgaya through the centuries and the fact stands subtantiated by a series of inscriptions. From Kurkihar we have many inscribed images of Balrama, Viṣṇu and various other dieties of both Hindus and Buddhist Pantheon. The image of Balrama is dated in the ninth year of Deva Pala, and those of Visnu belonging to the eleventh centuries A.D. These Kurkihar discoveries are remarkable for artistic excellence, high class workmanship and wealthy iconographic details. The bronzes are a class in itself in the whole range of ancient and medieval bronze industry in India. However, Kurkihar finds represent the period from 9th to 11th century A.D. and it is evident that during this period the Palas had undisputed hold over Gaya and Buddha-Gaya.

The whole of Gaya region north and south, was not so richly endowed at any other period of the early History of India than the Pala. So far as Bodhgaya is concerned, "The great mass of sculptures" belonged to the Pala kings.[33] In the sculptures of this period, there are numberless figures of the Buddha Sakyamuni sitting under the Bodhi-trees. The figures of Padmapani (Bodhisattva) are also numerous.[34]

The dated specimens of these sculptures enable us to set them in a chronological order. There is one inscription recording the dedication of a status of the Buddha during Sri Gopala-deva.[35] There is another inscription which records that installation of Mahadeva—Chaturmukhi in the Bodhgaya temple by a stone cutter, named Ujjavala in the

26th year of the reign of king Dharmapala, the son and successor of Gopala.deva.[36] One of the remaining inscriptions happens to be a record of the time of king Narayanapala-deva, who was the fourth in descent from Gopala. Mahipala-deva, a king of the same Pala dynasty, is eulogized in an inscription, dated in the 10th year of his reign' as *Parama-Bhattaraka, Parama-saugata, Sriman* Mahipaladeva, "the supreme soverign, the pre-eminent Buddhist, the fortunate Mahipala-deva.[37] There is yet another inscription on a long slab, which is a short record of the reign of king Rampala-deva, whom the Tibetan historian Taranath mentions as the grandfather of the last Pala king, named Yakshapala."[38]

It is probably during the reign of the Palas of Bengal that the Buddhist king Sri Purnabhadra of Sindh[39] erected a Gaudha-Kuti (temple) at Bodhgaya installing three Buddha images therein, and another Gaudhakuti was erected, like upto a flight of steps into heaven, by king Tunga of the Rashtra Kuta family in the 15th year of his reign.

The second great epoch of Chinese pilgrimage to Bodh-Gaya commenced in the 11th century, during the most flourishing period of Buddhist sovereignty, under king Mahipala and his successors.[40] Evidently these later pilgrims came in four or five batches, some during the reign of the great 'Han' dynasty and others during the reign of the great 'Sung' dynasty. They performed certain specific acts of merit and so that effect set up inscription, some of which exist only in fragments and some are lost for ever.

The Chinese pilgrims who came to India with specifics programme to study and visit Bodhgaya are several in numbers, some of them visited and studied Pali and Sanskrit herein the monasteries, and came back again Chi-I, the priest of the great dynasty visited Bodhgaya in Magadha

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was accompanied by Hwei-Tsei

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We further learn from
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Gaya (1175 A.D.) in the reign of Govindapala. Long before Govindapala and after Rampala, the forest tracts of Gaya and Bodhgaya had passed under the Manas. Taking advantage of the death of Rampala, the Manas declared themselves the master of that part of Magadha and ruled at least for two generations if not more. We learn from Govindapur Stone inscription of poet Gangadhar (Śaka 1059, A.D. 1137-38) that the Mana dynasty exercised authority in the district of Nawada. He refers to Magadhesha Varnamana at whose court his uncle, Dashratha, was appointed Pratihara while Gangadhera himself became a minister of Varnamana's son Rudramana.[47] We do not know any thing about their relationship with the Manas of Hazaribagh (of the Daudhapani Rock inscription). The Manas were brought to their knees by Govindapala who seems to have reigned his authority and ruled over the area from 116 A.D. onwards.[48] The Gahadawala under Vijayachandra and Jay Chandra conquered Gaya. The Bodhgaya inscription of Jaya Chandra Gahadawala (1189-98) shows that he controlled Gaya region or might have held sway over the region for some time. An inscription of Udagashri from Simhala of the 11th-12th cent. A.D. has also been noticed in Gaya.

It has been held by a set of scholars that the Pithipatis were Vassals of Turks. It would not be out of place to examine this statement in the light of epigraphic evidence. In Bodhgaya itself are records inscribed by the ruling chiefs of 'Kumaon' and Sapadalaksha whose dates suggests a continous occupation of the district by the Hindus upto the reign of Balbana. Asokavalla his brother and his priests figure in L. S. 51 and 74 corresponding to 1270 A.D. The fact that the inscription of Asokavalla, dated in the Atitarajya Samvat 51 and 74 of the Lakshmana Samvat, and the jani bigha inscription of Jayasena in 83 of the same are makes it clear that they must have conquered Gaya from the Gahadawalas.

Dharmaswami, the celebrated Tibetan travellers visited Gaya in 1234-36 A.D. when king Buddhasena was ruling and he was followed by his son Jayasena, who appears to have been ruling in 1283 A.D. Vajrasana (Bodhgaya) was the capital of the dynasty. Mangala Swamina (Biographer of Dharmaswamin) received a gift on behalf of the Vajrasana from Jaysena Pii-Jayasena may be regarded as the last independent king ruling in south Bihar.

It is believed that the Hinyanis controlled Bodhgaya and the abbots, who were well known for their knowledge of the *Tripitakas*, continued to be imported from Ceylon till the end of the thirteen century. The era referred to in the inscription may be regarded as having started in 1200 A.D. Budhasena ruled from 1200 to 1270 and he was the founder of the Sena dynasty of Gaya region.

A large number of Chinese inscriptions (ranging between tenth and thirteenth century A.D.) have been noticed from Bodhgaya and Gaya. These inscriptions refer to not only various monks but also to various aspects of Buddhism. Bodhgaya used to be frequented by Buddhists from different parts of the world. One of the inscriptions of the period praises Nirmanakya, Sambhogkya and Dharmakya. Rulers of Ceylon, Burma and China showed deep interest in Bodhgaya and Vajrasana.

Vajrasana was the capital of the Pithipatis and the Senas of Gaya were known as Pithipatis. Biddhasena (1200-1270) fled into the forest on the out skirts of Gaya on the approach of the Turkish reiders but returned soon after withdrawal. According to Dharmaswami the Buddhists had put up an image of Śiva at Vajrasana infront of the Buddha image in order to protect it from the wrath of the non-Buddhists. This would indicate that Brahmnical opposition to Buddhism was a factor to be reckoned within this region. The reaction of the Hindus against the Buddhists is also reflected from the Stone slab found at

Konch (in the Dist. of Gaya) which, while representing all the incarnations of Viṣṇu has excluded the figure of Buddha. Some such incidents could have provoked some reactions of the Buddhists to give Vent to their feelings, through the images of some of their gods, shown as humiliating the Hindu divinities. Dharmaswami spent his first monsoon retreat (July Oct. 1234) at Bodhgaya. He reached there on the Baisakhi purnima day. He had to flee away for seventeen days, owning to the attack of Turkish apprehension. The ruler of Magadhha, Buddhasena, was not able to provide protection. So, he escaped into the forest for fear of Turks. In fact he belonged to the chhinda dynasty and is referred to as Pithipati. Thus Gaya continued to be independent till the reign of Jayasena. Gaya Vishya at that time had two Nayas, Viz., Achala and Pitisinaccha, and there were two Viharas. Pithi was the abbreviation of Vajrapitha—Bodhgaya, and Buddhasena is described as Pithipati in his inscription, Asokavalla was the contemporary of Buddhasena.

The Stone slab inscription of Buddhasena (British Museum), is addressed to the inhabitants of the rural areas attached to the Vritti grant of rent free property of the entire foundation called Mahabodhi in favour of Bhikshu Pandita. Donees are advised to become submissive and pay him proper dues. He had to arrange for the rehabilitation of the Ceylonese monks and the property at Mahabodhi belonging to them should be handed over to them by the donee. According to Dharmaswami the Bodhgaya establishment had been deserted by all except for monks on accounts of the repeated Turkish conquests. Dharmaswami refers to the ruins of stone gate infront of Bodhgaya temple. Bodhgaya had Ceylonese Hinayani priests who had no respect for Tibetan Tantrikas and Mahayanists. The Mahayanist goddess Tara was popular at Bodhgaya.

The Lakshmana Samvat used in the three Gaya record (*E.I.* XII.28-29, *I.A.* XL VIII 47)[49] refers to an era

connected with the king of that name, Lakshamanasena of Bengal. In this case it appears that the era was counted originally from the accession of Lakshamanasena in 1179 A.D. and the year 83 of Buddhasena's record would be 1262 A.D. when Jayasena was ruling. According to Altekar, the era started in 1200 A.D. which, however is not convincing.

To focuss the ancient tract of Uravela as a whole we will have to aware of a number of spots which acquired special sanctity in the estimation of Buddhists from their association with the movements of the Buddha both before and after the great enlightenment. Here our endeavour will be to make an intensive study of the historical development of that remarkable spot in the neighbour hood of Sevanigama which was destined to be viewed by the Buddhists as the prominent place of pilgrimage, reigned over by the lord Buddha.[50] We can trace this spot in a calm retreat within a few paces from the bank of the Neranjana of Neranjara and with a luxuriant frontage of a salgrove.[51] The selection of this very spot in preference to the Pragbodhi hill and its fearful surroundings was no were accident. However, it was a deliberate choice for, the place had a special appeal to his imagination and proved peculiary congenial to his temprament.

As a matter of fact, in His consequent journey there were several important places and sites by which He might have attracte; for example, the city of Gaya, through which he had passed, had no attraction for him.[52] That crowded area, like the cities of Rajgriha, Benaras, Vaisali, Kapilvastu and Kausambi had no fascination for him, is too clearly borne out by the history of Buddhism. In this context we find that the sites selected for planting the centres of the new religion have always been pleasant woodland and picturesque with open prospects and delightful surroundings as offered by the famous Deer-Park at Rishi Pattana in the

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vicinity of Benaras, the Bamboo-grove of king Bimbisara and the Mango-grove of Jivaka in the Vicinity of Rajgriha.[53] All these examples may lead us to think that neither the crowded cities nor the dense forests and like other fearful places appealed really to His imagination or suited his temprament.[54]

Fa-Hian and Hiuen-Tsang have left almost in equal terms and interesting description of circumstances that imelled the Buddha to avoid the dangerous crags and fearful forests of the Prabodhi hill (Po-lo-ki-po-ti), situated some four or five miles north-east from Bodhgaya, and to select the spot noted above. Now it felt necessary to quote the description of Hiuen-Tsang which is more effective towards this subject during His travelling.

To the east of the place where Gaya Kasyapa sacrificed to fire, crossing a great (?), We come to a mountain called Pragbodhi (Po-lo-ki-po-ti). Tathāgata after deligently seeking for six years and not yet obtaining supreme wisdom. After this, he gave up his penance and accepted the rice milk (of sujata). As he went to the north-east, he saw that this mountain was secluded and dark; whereupon he desired to seek enlightenment thereon Ascending the north-east slope and coming to the top, the earth shook and mountain quaked, whilst the mountain cleva in terror spake thus to Bodhisattva :—

"This mountain is not the fortunate spot for attaining supreme wisdom. If you stop here and engaged in this *Samadhi* of Diamond, the earth will buake and the movntain will be over thrown upon you." Then Bodhisattva—descended, and half way down the south-west slope he halted. There, backed by the crag and facing a torrent, is a great stone chamber. Here he sat down cross-legged. Again the earth quaked and the mountain shook.[55] Then a Deva of the pure abode (*sudhavasa*) criedout in space, 'This is not the place for a *Tathagata* to perfect supreme wisdom. From

this south-west, 14 or 15 Li, not far from the place of penance, there is a *pippala* (pi-Po-Lo) tree under which is a diamond throne. All the past Buddhas seated on this throne have obtained true enlightenment, and so will those yet to come. Pray, then, proceed to that spot'. Then Bodhhisattva rising up the Dragon dwelling in the cave said, this cave is pure and excellent. Here you may accomplish the holy (aim). Then Bodhisattva having discovered that this was not the place for accomplishing his aim, to appears the Dragon he left him his shadow and departed. The *Devas* going before, led the way and accompanied him to Bodhi tree."[56]

We get much earlier and more authentic account regarding fearful tracts and dense forests, in the *Bhaya-bharva suta* of the *Majjhima Nikaya*. According to the opinion of the Brahmin Janussoni (Janasruti) the forest regions and arid tracts are highly difficult of habitation, the much needed inwardness of self is to find comfort in such liveliness, the forest, as it seems, distracts the mind failing to attain due composure, the Buddha is represented as emphatically endorsing it in terms :—

"Evam etam, Brahmana, evam, etam Brahmana" (Even so it is, O Brahmana, so it is). And in the same strain He goes on to say that this very thought occurred to Him prior to His attainment of perfect wisdom, when He has not yet seen the great light and was still persuing His career as *Bodhisattva*.[57] Further on He gives an idea how He had spent there His days and night in dreadful suspense.

"While I dwelt there a beast would be heard approaching, or a bird would drop down a dried twig, or the wind would ruffle the leaves. That would set me thinkding" There, forsooth, comes the very dreadful horror. Then, O Brahmna this thought occured to me. A seeker of truth that I am should I be caring for the fear. Now will I meet the awful fee as it comes from any position I may be in."[58]

In another *Sutta*, Viz, *Mahasihanada*, He endeavours to show that He could willingly face all these apprehended troubles only so long as He maintained to live up to the fruitless penances of the extreme asceties such as the Śaivas and Ājivikas.[59] To quote him in his own words :—

"I used to live then, O Sariputta, entering into a fearful woodland. That was indeed the most dreadful part of the dreadful land whoever, not free as yet from passions, dares enter such a tract, horripilation overtakes him all the more causing the hair of this body to stand erect." Further it is mentioned that throughout the autumn and winter months and even during the dry first four days I used to spend the night under the open sky and the day in the heart of the wood, while during the last month of summar I followed a reverse course.

It is clearly suggested in the *Bhaya Bherava sutta* that a dense and fearful forest generally suits these of dark mentality.[60] The Śaivas and the Ājivikas who find it difficult to cope with their own nature which is turbulent and rebellious, while to those who like the Buddha are of serene mind by their natural dispostion, the locality which appeals is a calm retreat with open prospects and delightful surroundings, neither in a hurb of crowded city nor at the same time far from it. We have noticed how deeply impressed was the Buddha at the lovely sight of the village Sevanigama on his first arrival there and have narrated how pleasant picture provides this part of the grassy woodland, where Nerajana is flowing on in a glassy stream, which must be the fitting place for a scion of a noble race,[61] streniously striving after the calm retreat in Uruvela, finally selected and resorted to by the Buddha for His last efforts towards the realization of Supreme wisdom, is popularly known now-a-days by the name of Bodhyaya. The other term Buddha-Gaya occurs for the first time in the Epocryphal inscription of Amaraderea.[62] The Rock edict eight of Asoka bears clear evidence to establish that the holy city

was known as far back as the 3rd century B.C. by the name of *Sambodhi*,[63] a term corresponding to *Mahabodhi* of the later inscriptions. Whether the term be *sambodhi* or *Mahabodhi*, we can not but admit that it primarily denotes the Great Bo-tree and secondarily the place of Buddha's enlihtenment. We mean that *Sambodhi* or *Mahabodhi* is the same term as Bodhi of the Barhut labels,[64] Bodhi Vriksha of Buddhist literature.

Thus it is clear that Budhagaya is essentially the spot of the Bo-tree, which is to say that the Bo-tree has lent its name to the sacred site. The tree is in reality a lordly Asvattha or Pipala, the Indian fig. The Buddhist legends make it manifest, however, that the Bo-tree was not Asvattha in all cases, the different Buddhas having different Bo-trees, consequently, the proposition stands that the tree itself had derived its distinctive epithet from its association with the Buddhas signal achivement of Budhahood, the term *Bodhi-rukkha* being explained by Boddhaghosha as denoting a tree under which a Buddha attains englightenment. From this it follows that to view the history of Bodhgaya from the Buddhist point of view is to visulise the gradual process of geographical extension and enhancement of the historical importance of the spot of the Bo-tree.[65]

However the spot of the Bo-tree in its narrowest has been known lay the well known name of *Bodhi Manda* or *Mahabodi Manda*, a term signifying a terrace surrounding the foot of the Bo-tree. The *Kalingabod-hi Jataka*[66] furnishes us with an artistic description of the *Bodhi-Manda* and its surroundings prior to the advent of the *Bodhisattva* on this spot. As this *Jataka* gives us to understand, the *Bodhi-manda* was just at that time a small silver white sandy ridge around the Bo-tree with a radius eight *karisas* and without a single blade of grass growing upon it. This was, then, encircled by the creepers with their sepentine cource and surrounded by a grassy wood-land with the lordley trees

inclining all towards the Bo-tree that stood on the central spot.[67]

It is on the same spot of the Bo-tree that the princely ascetic siddhartha sat down at last cross legged with face turned towards the eastern quarter, determined to do or die, with a firm resolve not move from his seat until he attined his goal even if his body withered away and his skin bones and flesh underwent dissolution, even it the sky rent asunder the earth left her dixed station (nabham phalegya, pathavim Chaleya). Thus this spot became primarily noted for the enthoronement of a triumphant human will, and no less for the display of the Undaunted moral courage to break away with the past tradition and the grand achivement of enlightenment of the course of historical development of this three blessed spot at the time of the advent of the Buddha down to the eve of the Muslim conquests.

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4

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND ACTIVITIES

From archaeological finds it appears that people were living in Bodhgaya much earlier than Buddha, and some of the villages of this area are established on the ancient mounds, which are still uneaposed. However, in this context we discuss below some of the archaeological sites and some of the activities of the region.

Uruvela

This place is often mentioned in Pali literature.[1] It was probably a forest tract with covered a large area to the south of the *Gayasirsha*[2] (24° 42′, 85° 0′) in the time of the Buddha, and may have spread on both the banks of the Phalgu or Niranjana. The Buddha came to Uruvela to practice penance in its syluan solitude, its landscape gladdened he heart[3] and he stayed there for six years.

D.R. Patil has suggested that about 2½ miles from Bodhgaya on the Dhongra hill is the village of Urel, representing the ancient *Uruvela*, *Uruwelaya* or *Uruvilwa* where the eldest of the three *Kasyapa* brothers, the most famous of the sages of Buddha's time, is said to have lived. The name *Uruvela* has been variously derived by Cunningham from the sandy wastes of the river or from the close by forest of Bel trees.[4] The Ceylonese chronicles, the *Mahavamsa*, the *Lalita-vistara*, and other Buddhist texts abound in reference to Uruvela as the place intimately associated with the events of Buddha's

life just before his achievement of perfect wisdom underneath the famous tree. The sacred place of the tree may, therefore, have been known originally from the village of Uruvela for sometimes, untill it acquired a separate name for itself. Such a name was latter variously known as Bodhi, Mahabodhi or Buddha Gaya. We can not ascertain the exact date when the site became known as Buddha Gaya. Asoka[5] in one of his inscription's refers to this place as Sambodhi.

It is, however, clear that Uruvela became associated with the name of Buddha after attaining enlightenment. We can conjecture that a name purporting to show the relation of the Buddha with Uruvela became prevalent first among the disciples of the Buddha, who used the new name to attach greater importance[6] to this insignificant place. The people of distant provinces were not so familiar with it and knew of Gaya rather than of Uruvela.

Senanigama (Bakraur, 24° 42′, 85° 0′) :

This was a village situated in the neighbourhood of Uruvela on the bank of the Neranjana.[7] It evidently formed a part of the Uruvela tract, which covered a large area. The name of the village in spelt Senanigama.[8] The Lalitavistara calls it Senapatika Nagara.

A mound apparently representing ruins of a large stupa was noticed here by Cunnigham in 1861 to the north of the village on the eastern side of the Nirenjana river. It is locally called as Katani. Cunningham identified the mound with that of the Stupa known to Buddhist tradition as the Gandha-hasti-stupa. Hiuen-Tsang mentions the name of the place as Ajayapura. Buchanan states that Mr. Boddam, the former collector of Gaya, had removed many stones and bricks[9] from here for construction of buildings at Gaya. According to Burmese tradition one of the celebrated personalities of Buddhism died here[10] which was confirmed by the discovery of the Stone-chest taken away by Boddam. The finds of

numerous lac seals[11] impressed with Buddha's figure's had also been mentioned by Cunningham in his reports. The outline of the Stupa was made out by Cunningham as 150′ in diameter while he gave the height of the mound as 50′ in about 1862. When Stein visited the spot[12] in 1899, the height had come down to nearly 25 feet.

A tank, which is locally known as Matanga-vapi is reported by Cunningham and is still situated about 500 yards to the south-east of the Stupa. It is lined with ancient embankments with a modern Śaiva temple of Matangeśvara nearby held sacred by the Hindu pilgrims. Since Matanga in Sanskrit means an elephant, the name of the tank may be said to preserve a reminescence of the Buddhist legend of the Gandha-hasti-Stupa. There is another tank in the area locally known as Marttanda-Pokhar or Suraj-Pokhar (kund). It measures 800′ square and is lined with masonery walls.

On the bank of the river and on the sides of the above tank are temples built in late historical time[13] which contain sculptures taken from earlier ruins. Finally this ruin was excavated by Sri K. M. Srivastava of the Archaeological Survey of India during the year 1972-73, whose detailed accounts will be discussed in later chapter as in case of Stupa dealing. However, the excavation proved that Bakraur was the home place of Sujata who offered Khir to Siddhartha.

Mora Hill (Dhungeshwari) :

This hill (cave) is situated about 3 miles to the north-east of present Bodhgaya on the eastern bank of the river Phalugu. The hill had been identified by Cunningham with the Pragbodhi[14] mountain of the Buddhist tradition, where the Buddha is said to have lived for some time before he proceeded to Uruvela, i.e. Bodhgaya. The identification is made from the fact that, half-way up the western slope of the hill, facing the river Phalugu, is a natural fissure or covern shaped, like a crescent, 37 × 5½′, with a small entrance 3′ 2″ wide and 4′ 10″ high, where Buddha is said to have lived.

Both Fa-hian and Hiuen-Tsang visited and described the cave of the Pragbodhi mountain and their accounts, according to Cunningham, would perhaps refer to this cave.[15] The height of the cave at the other southern end is hardly 2′ 7″; while the width is 1′ 7″. At the back or east side of the cavern there is "a ledge of rock, which probably served as a pedestal for the shadow of Buddha which was figured on the rock." When Bloch visited the cave in 1902 he saw the entrance recently closed by[16] a masonary wall, put up by a Jogi who resided in the cave. It admits access only through a small door. No ancient remains of any importance are to be seen at this place.

The identification so made by Cunningham and accepted by Bloch is, however, rendered doubtful by another account on the same hill by Oldhan which is quoted in the Distt. Gazetteer. Oldhan refers to the central portion of the hill as *Dhongra Hill*.[17] About half way down the north-western slope, quite hidden from below by a wall of rock, is a cave at the base of a precipitous cliff. The entrance is small, and has been fitted during comparatively recent years by some ascetic[18] with a frame work of wood to hold a door, if door it can be called, the aperture of which is little more than 2 feet square. Within, the cave is of an irregular oval shape, measuring about 16 feet 5 inches from north-east to south-west and 10 feet 9 inches from north-west to south-east. The roof is vaulted, and about 9½ feet high at the heighest point.

The roof had apparently been roughly hewn ; but centuries of weathering has oleliterated any traces of cutting. A broken stone image of an eight-armed goddess, with a few letters of the Buddist formulas in Kutila characters of perhapes the 9th or 10th century,[19] lies in the cave. Below the cave on the slope of the hill, is a large artificially levelled terrace, about 70 yards square, with traces of the foundations of stone buildings ; while round about are other remains of

smaller dimentions. Above the cave, along the summit of the hill, are the remains of some seven stupas of different sizes, the largest being about 40 feet in diameter. The cave so described by Oldham, is to the north[20] of the natural cavern seen by Cunningham and does not seem to have been noticed by the latter. It is somewhat difficult to find it out, since it is completely hidden from below. From its description and artificial character as well as from the clear traces of Buddhist ruins in its vicinity, it appears Cunningham's identification is a little wide of the mark, the cave mentioned by the Chinese pilgrims being perhaps the one described by Oldham. Oldham has not described and dated the Buddhist ruins near the cave more fully ; but it appears they are of a later date than the time when the two Chinese piligrms visited the area.[21] It is, however, pointed out that an inscription found at Bodhgaya, dated V.S. 1240? i.e. A.D. 1183 (?), of the time of king Jayachandra of Kanauj, actually records excavation of a large cave by a Buddhist monk Srimitra at Jayapura, which would appear to be the same as Ajayapura mentioned by Hiuen-Tsang for the site of the ruins at Bakraur,[22] hardly a mile or so away from this hill and the cave. However, the identification of the cave of the Pragbodhi mountain as seen by the Chinese pilgrims may, therefore, be the same cave.[23] As there is no other hill in the locality which so clearly resembles the discription of the pilgrims. Hence Cunningham seems to be correct in its identification.

Japanese Expeditton :

An archaeological research expedition to India was sent by the Japanese Government to excavate the site of Buddhist importance at Bodhgaya in the year 1957. Under the guidence of Dr. Nagao, a professor of the Kyuto University with colleboration of Japan Government.

They, however, selected the site. It was the ancient site of the mound of *Sangha Ram* Monastery, which later known as the mound of Amar Sinh's fort, just to the noth of Maha-

bodhi temple. The mound extends east to west from 1500 to 2000 feet and nearly 1000 feet in breadth from north to south. Here, in November 1885 Mr. Beglar and Cunningham have discovered the remains of a great Monestry.

The technical staff of the Archaeological Survey of India had undertaken only one trench in the central part and on the highest point of the mound ; but it was not a scientific process of excavation. However, during the course of excavation it was found that it was a dump site, so they could not get through the stratified layers, since the most part of it was too disturbed. Rather they were succeeded to discover some important antiquities, stone pieces, grains, brick bats and different type of pot sherds. Among the potsherds mentioned may be made of Red ware of good fabries.[24] A Neolithic shelt was also founded from here, which is nearly $2 \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in size. Rest were the mixed materials. In regard of its dating, nothing definitely can be said. The materials are kept in the Archaeological Museum, Bodhgaya, Gaya and Bihar.

Mocharim (Muchlinda-Tank) :

This place is often mentioned in the Ceylonese chronicles or Pali texts. It was probably a forest tract which covered a large area to the south of the ancient Uruvela in the time of the Buddha. It is $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the present Mahabodhi temple and one mile from present Urel, and is spread on the bank of the Phalgu or Nirangana. According to Cunningham's record—"To the south of the Bodhi tree, out side the walls, for about 10 li ($1\frac{1}{2}$ mile), the sacred monuments were so numerous that Hiuen-Tsang found it very difficult to describe them."[25] Further he mentioned that in the midst of a wood was the tank of *Muchlinda*, king of the *Nagas*. A small Vihara contining the figure of Budha is situated to the south-east of the village of Urel. This Vihar contained a figure of Buddha.[26] Most probably this village is known after the name of the Muchlinda tank. No trace

of any mound is founded nor any existence of Vihar could find. As this village land is very fertile so in all the directions land was occupied for agriculture purposes, except a little plot, where *Devi-Sthan* is established. There is a small temple made of modern bricks in the southern part of the village on the bank of Niranjana, and where a statue of Buddha, was founded.[27]

According to Hiuen-Tsang's report and Pali text the location of the Muchlinda tank is exactly same even today. While Begglar and Cunningham have mentioned this tank nearby of Urel rather they have shown it in their plan too, located near to the Urel and Tika Bigha.

Amwan-Mound 1

The village is nearly 3.5 kilometers towards the north of Bodhgaya and is established on the western bank of the river Phalgu. A local pitch road connecting Bodhgaya with Gaya Chowk pass through this village. This village is under Bodhgaya Police station, in the Gaya district.

The mound covers an area of about five (5) acres of land with a maximum height of ten (10) feet from the surface at present. Black slip ware, of good fabrication, rope-impressed potsherds and few pieces of carrinated handi's along with a terracotta dabber have been discovered in course of the excavations of a well on this mound ; and remains of massive structure, at the a depth of five (5) feet from the ground level were also observed. On the basis of this finds, it appears that the site represents a monument belonging to that Buddhist period. Finds from here are dated between 2nd century B.C. to 12th century A.D. Local tradition, however, ascribes the mound to a Koalh-raja. And in a much later date it was occupied by Mughal emperor, and consequently one of them established a Kuchahri over it. Later on, when Zamindari partha was abolished local people acquired the whole mound or brought them under their occupation. Presently

it is covered with all sorts of houses and we find it difficult to concentrate and study the nature of the mound.

Pachchatti-Mound 1 (Extension of Amar Sinh's Fort)

The position of the Great Monastery to the north of the Great Temple corresponds exactly with the extensive mound known as Amar Sinh's fort. The date of Amar Sinh is quite uncertain, but as he is said to have been a Suir, or aboriginal —Sovior, it is concluded that he must have held power before the rise of the Pala Rajas, in 800 A.D. Buchanan mentions that mound was called Rajasthan, or "the Palace,[28] a name which is now confined to the group of buildings outside the north-west corner of the monastery enclosure.

Present mound is from 1,500 to 2,000 feet in length from west to east, and nearly 1,000 feet in breadth from south to north and after a little gapping it extends towards northwards measuring about 1500 feet, on which present mohalla Pachchatti is situated. A part of this mound was excavated by Cunningham and Beglar, and they discovered the remains of a great monastery. This was the monastery which was built by a king of Ceylon[29] known as Meghavarmana with the permission from Samudra Gupta. Literally this has also mentioned in the inscription of Mahanaman.[30] More-over this mound is ascribed to the Gupta and post periods. The detailed accounts of it has been discussed in the chapter of Architectural Remains.

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5

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS FROM PROTO-HISTORIC TO EARLY HISTORIC PERIOD

Archaeological operations in and around Bodhgaya has been carried out time to time from the last century with the efforts of European, Japanese and Indian explorers and excavators. Most of the earlier works were not scientific. Yet, they provide adequate materials for the study of ancient Bodhgaya. However, the latest excavation at the site helped us in ascertaining the cultural sequences, chronology and the potentiality of the site (Bodhgaya). In this context we have based on the excavated site of Taradih, which revealed five successive cultural periods, extending from *c.* 1100 B. C. to *c.* 1200 A.D.

Period-I : Chalcolithic Culture :

Period I, represented cultural deposit of the chalcolithic complex just over the natural soil which is of grenish yellow here. It measured nearly 70 cms. and is compared of yellow compact alluvial earth, Evidences revealed by operations showed a developed rural economy in which agriculture, hunting and fishing played an important role, which was similar to that of Sonpur culture I. The evidences of rammed floors, huts made of wattle and duab have discovered. Ovens of various sizes came across at different levels of the period. Iron in any form was not encountered where as a

fish hook of copper and a blade of carnelion were picked up from this level.

The porttery in general was wheel made and well fired but the hand made specimens were not altogather wanting. The ceramics, although dominated by red were specimens, were yet considerably represented by Black-and-red were and black ware examples. The pottery had usually fine and thick slip ranging from chocolate through crimson-red, light red, orange to ochre in colour, on the sherds of red were as well as on red portions of the black-and-red were. Jars were made in two parts, the rim portion was shaped on wheel while the profile was modelled by hands, and then both the parts were carefully luted-having no ship over them.

The main pottery types included dish-on-stand, bowl with a pedestal base, bowl with globular body and out curved or featureless rim, ring based bowl, perforated bowl, spouted vessel, deep and shallow dish, small vase, small to medium size jar with a sharp crination at the neck, flared out rim etc. The shoulders of a few jars of red ware showed a significant applique designs consisting of twisted rope, pinched, applique designs, knob patterns, post firing scratched design etc. Some pices of Black and Red ware, red ware and black ware bore white paintings in the form of wavy lines and striaght and oblique strokes and dots.

Among notable antiquities of stone, were a neolithic celt a carnelion blade, a quern and a few pestles and a hammer like object. The important finds of bone were represented sockated as well as tanged arrow-heads, barbed arrow heads, points, chisels etc. The discovery of a single copper fish hook was very significant as it not only qualified the site for its chalcolithic characters but also hinted at its fishing economy during the period under review. The notable finds of Terracotta were beads and comical objects. A few disc shaped beads having perforation at the centre were also noteworthy.

With a view to bridging the great hiatus that stretched from the end of the Harrappan chalcolithic culture to the beginning of the historic period, archaeologists made a great efforts by taking up excavations at a number of sites. Excavation at Taradih established the main focus of the chalcolithic culture of Bodhgaya as excavations at Sonpur and Chirand indicated the efflorescence of the chalcolithic culture in Bihar. Chirand proved to be a veritable rich site of the culture in the Post-Harappa period.[1] Sonpur in the Gaya district is another promising site.[2] Limited excavations at Taradih in the Gaya district yielded remains of the chalcolithic period. Although the excavated remains from Chirand, Sonpur, Taradih and other sites can not stand in favourable comparision with what have been unearthed at Ahar, Gilund, Navadatoli, Jorwe etc ; yet with the objects discovered, a palpably understandable picture can be drawn of the material culture of the people who resided in Bodhgaya during the chalcolithic period. Moreover, the peopls of Bihar (Bodhgaya) at Taradih, Sonpur and Chirand in the chalcolithic period enjoyed the benefits of the same culture as at Ahar, Gilund, etc. However, the Picture of the material culture of the chalcolithic Bodhgaya may also be reconstructed with the aid of what have been found at the other comparable sites.

The post-Harappan chalcolithic people of Bihar appear to have resided in extremely modest structures which they erected themselves. The chalcolithic people of Bodhgaya constructed their house out of perishable materials like reed and bamboo which weae probably locally available to them. The reed or bamboo were erected in a manner so as to serve as well to their houses which were finally finished off and plastered by mud. At Ahar[3] and Navadātoli on the west and Pandu-Rajar-Dhibi[4] on the east, similar methods of house construction were also employed. Bricks either sundried or kiln-burnt do not seen to have been used at Bodhgaya during the chalcolithic period. It was at Gilund[5] only that

the kiln burnt bricks were used for the construction of the houses in the chalcolithic period.

The exact plan of the houses are afforded by the post holes marking out areas which they enclosed, and on this basis the houses on plan appear to be either circular or square or rectangular. The floors of the houses were made up of clay mixed with silt and sometimes were also paved with river gravels.

It is, however, anybody's guess how the houeses may have been roofed, the superstructures on account of their impermanent character having naturally disappeared in due course by the ravage of time. Thatch work tied to the bamboo or reed frame work may have efficiently been utilized for roofing the houses. Similar is the practice which the villagers still follow in the construction of their hutments. The condition of the chalcolithic people in this respect does not seem to have been much different from what is prevalent even these days. That the roofs of the houses may have been supported on wooden or bamboo posts seem more than certain. The houses, as at Ahr,[6] were seemingly partitioned into a number of rooms by raising walls, one of them having served the purpose of kitchen. Burnt spaces with the remains of ash at Sonpur, Chirand and Taradih may indicate the cooking points in the kitchen where hearth were provided for the cooking purposes. Hearths of different types have been found at Ahar, Gilund, Pandu-Rajar-Dhibi[7] and any of the types might have been invogue in Bodhgaya. Single mouthed clay hearths, as at Pandu-Rajar-Dhibi, appear to have been favoured at Taradih. Different kinds of ovens, circular, semi circular, hexagonal and triangular types, have been dug-out from here belonging to trench No. TRH-III, IV, V & IX. From trench No. III & V, it appears that the use of ovens have been started alongwith period I just with the start of an occupational layer. Semi circular hearth resembled the clay hearth used even these days by the

villagers. Chirand has also yielded remains of multi armed hearths, but in the post chalcolithic level.

No doubt, the people took a cultivation as means of their livelihood as proved by the impression of paddy husks in the section of the potteries. This fact is further supported by the discovery of pestles and a quern at the site from period I. Therefore, agriculture, fishing and hunting seem to have been the main stay of their economy. It is although a fact that the chalcolithic people of this site or any where also have not yielded any agricultural implement, yet there can be no doubt that the people during the period took to cultivation as means of their livelihood.

Fishing and hunting were another important source of their subsistence of the chalcolithic people of Bodhgaya. Fish-bones, mostly in fragmentary condition, very rarely intact, found from here in large number, amply prove fishing as an important means of their susistence. The discovery of arrow-heads and a fish-hook of copper[8] along with animal bone clearly indicate that the people took hunting and fishing not for their amusement but for their livelihood. They also used to eat cereals, vegetable food and animal flesh. The bones of the domesticated animal like cow and goat indicate that they took such animal's flesh either by killing domesticated animals or by hunting.

The discovery of crucibles, copper-ore and full depth semi-circular oven indicate the process of copper melting and toward manufacturing of copper goods at Bodhgaya. It was no doubt an important industry of the chalcolithic period, and as the evidence goes, Ahar was the main centre where copper was melted. But no evidence of copper melting have been brought to light from other sites of Bihar.

Earthen lamps and Earthen vessels played key role in the social, religious and more specially economic life of the chalcolithic people not only at Bodhgaya but also at other sites of Bihar and other places.

From clay people produced vessels for storing grains, water and other liquid things, dishes for taking solid food in them and other pots needed in their daily life. The numerous potteries of different wares and types clearly indicate that creative genius of the contemporary potters.

The main pottery types included dish-on-stand, bowl with pedestal base, bowl with globular body and out curved or featureless ring, rim based bowl, perforated lipped bowl, spouted vessels, shallow and deep dish, small vase, small to medium size jar with sharp carrination at the neck and flared out rim etc. potteries were beautified by applique designs. The shoulder of a few Jars of red ware showed significant applique design consisting of twisted rope, knob, patterns, pinched applique and cut design, the thumb pressed design, nail pressed design. The posts were also decorated by post firing scratched design.

A fairly good number of painted black-and-red ware along with painted red ware and black ware were found from the site. Painting had been found both on the interior as well as on the exterior of the pot. Potsherds bore white or creamish white paintings on the red and black surfaces. It is significant to note here that the black and red ware of this site bore painting on the exterior of the pot also, a feature hither to unknown from any site of the eastern region. The painted designs were wavy lines and oblique strokes etc. To judge from the customs prevalent even these days, the potters seem to have performed this process, while their women gave finishing touches to the potteries, and also painted the designs. Long necked jar, vase bowl, dish and basin are among the principal types noticed in the black-and-red ware. Dish was probably less popular at Sonpur but more in Bodhgaya in black and red ware. While long necked jar was very common at Chirand,[9] it is conspicuous by its absence at Sonpur. Similar was the case with the dish-on-stand which has been reported from Chirand[10] as well as from Taradih.

The majority of bowl and earthern lamp from this period at Bodhgaya may have served some religious purpose. It may have more particularly been used in pousing some kind of clearified butter, scented liquid or milk on a sacrificial alter or figure of a diety which they may have worshipped.

Pottery since very early times has been utilised by the village potters as a medium for expressing their artistic talents, and the potters of the chalcolithic Bodhgaya do not seem to have lagged behind in this respect. The painted design, are of extremely redimentary character and at the same time they are not many. It is mainly the group of parallel lines and cluster of dots which took the fancy of the potters-artists and which in combination with certain geometric forms helped them to create variegated patterns pleasing to the eyes. Rope, thumb preseed, oblique strokes and criss-cross designs in applique have been noticed on the potteries from Chirand and Sonpur too. Sonpur has also yielded certain black-and-red ware sherds with graffiti marks, though not from the earliest strata.[11]

The chalcolithic people of Bodhgaya do not seem to have taken much interest in the preparation of terracotta figurine. Only a few seals and sealing[12] as well as leads have been reported.

The materials discovered in Bodhgaya from the period under review revealed that the people lived in very modest house made of wattle and daub which they constructed with their own hands, and had fancy for ornaments made out of clay, stone and steatite. Sizable number of heads, stone, and terracotta, were collected there. The semiprecious stones such as agate, chalcedony, carnelian etc. were used for manufacturing beads of various shapes like barrel, cylinderical and disc etc. The beads were well polished and finished. These beads might have been used in the various forms of necklace, etc. in the same way the bone pins might have been used as hair pins and ear pins or other might be serving as antimony

rods for decorating their eye lids. They used earthen lamp for their ritual purposes and earthen vessels were used for the storing grains water and some thing like that which was produced by the village potters, cultivated grains, also eat meat and fish and improved their economic status by trade and commerce and also by manufacturing trade goods of copper and bones. Moreover on the basis of the above mentioned evidences it can be said that Pre-Iron People of Bodhgaya (Taradih) were quite fashionable to use these material forms, and they took delight in pursuing the art of painting and design. This flourishing culture may be dated *c.* 1100 B. C. to *c.* 600 B.C.

Period II (Iron—N.B.P. age) :

The second period of occupation is marked by the appearence of N.B.P. and Iron. The technique of the pottery making was highly developped during this period. The deluxe pottery like N.B.P. (Northern black polished pottery) was prepared at that time whose preparatory technique is still mysterious, which on looking seems like deep coloured glass and gives metallic sound on striking. Apart from these, coins and many fancy goods of semiprecious stone, copper and Iron wer introduced. Moreover keeping these materials and its associates in views this period was devided into two subcultures like *Period II A* and *Period II. B.*

Period II A was marked by the appearance of Iron. The *Black and Red ware*, Black ware and Red ware of the earlier period continued in this period but much improved in qualities and fabrics. These were made of well levigated clay and were well fired. The core of these specimens did not show any mixture of paddy husks with clay. Their fabric ranges from medium to fine. The pottery of this period also gave metallic sound when over striken with fingers. Large ceramic specimens showed the evidence of paddy husks and examples of the black-and-red and black wares possessed very thin film of glaze on their surface. The black slipped ware and grey

ware also appeared in association with Iron. The noteworthy pottery types included vase, handi, rimless handi, storage jar, *Lota shaped bowl*, basin, lipped bowl, lid-cum-bowl etc. A few pot sherds also bore-graffitti marks.

The remains of lime coated rammed floors and hearths were also noticed in course of excavations. Among the notable antiquities of Iron, mention may be made of arrow heads, spear-heads, and other implements like pin and knives. The worthwhile objects of stone were represented by beads, ball, pestle, etc. Of important objects of bone note worthy were arrow heads, pin, points, nose-stud, etc. A bangle of copper and ring also yielded from this period. The discovery of *Iron Slage* from this level indicates a considerable advancement in the field of metallurgy.

Period II B :

It was distinguished by the appearance of the Northern Black polished ware. The black-and-red ware still continued but in a lesser frequency. Several new shapes of red ware and black slipped ware made their appearance during this period. The note worthy types included vase of out curved thickened rim and out curved beaded rim dish with sharp carnation, the waist bowl with everted rim, bowl with horizontally splayed out rim, basin with beaded rim, lipped basin, lid cum bowl, flatbased bowl, trough etc.

Among the important stone antiquities mention may be made of beads of semiprecious stones, ball, pestle, top of nose stud, etc. The worthwhile object of bone included arrow-head, pin, point, stylus, bead etc. while the terracotta objects represented by symbol learing sealing, bead, ball, ear-lobe, sangle etc. The note worthy objects of copper included bead bangle, needle, rod, earring etc.

The N.B.P pottery has been described as the deluxe ware of its time. The surface bears highly lustrous mirror-like polish with various shades, such as steel-blue, black, silvery golden, pinkish and sometimes in bi-colour in golden

and silvery. Sonpur and Bodhgaya claimed to be the only site in Bihar, from where very fine specimens of this pottery have been reported in abudance. Probably it was a trade pottery.

The period also witnessed use of iron on mass scale. Tools and implements of this metal included lance, arrow head, knife, nail etc. The use of copper also increased. Among the terracotta figurines mention may be made of a dancing girl, whose skrit was flouncing, is a good example of delicate taste. This period, however showed all traits of Sonpur II, rather we can say that the Bodhgaya people were materially more advanced than their counter part of Sonpur. Moreover this period can be dated between *c.* 600 B.C. to *c.* 200 B.C.

Scientific excavations and exploration conducted so far in Bodhgaya throw considerable light on the evolution and development of early history and culture of the area. The remains of the earliest peasant communities of Bodhgaya were in the chalcolithic stage of evolution and flourished in the last of the second millenium B.C. ; they have been unearthed at Sonpur and Taradih (Bodhgaya). The people lived in huts and practiced agriculture, domestication of animals hunting and fishing for their subsistence. They knew copper, but still used stone tools. In the subsequent phase, iron was introduced, which gave the people a new power and a new sense of security. This metal was used on mass scale, which facilitated large scale agriculture and military operation. Coins was also introduced as a medium of exchange which boosted trade and commerce. Here large scale agriculture, trade and moneyed economy played a vital role in the emergence of market or cities and facilitated the rise of Magadhan imperialism in the sixth century B.C.

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5. *IAR*, 1959-60, p. 43, Pl. XLIII.
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8. Prasad, A.K., "The remains of Chalcolithic culture at Taradiha", *Man and Environment*, Vol. VIII, 1984, pp. 91-93.
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12. Prasad, A.K., *op. cit.*, pp. 92-93.

6

ARCHITECTURAL REMAINS

(A) MAHABODHI TEMPLE COMPLEX

The Mahabodhi temple occupies an important place in the hitsory of Buddhism. The temple as it exists now has undergone many changes during its long history. As yet, we have no direct evidence to fix up the date of the first establishment of Mahabodhi temple complex. Various traditions ascribe the erection of the very first temple of Mahabodhi to the great Indian emperor Aśoka of the third century B.C. Incidentally it may be mentioned here that Aśoka in his Rock-edict VIII recorded that "In the ages gone by, the king went forth on pleasure trips. Here were hunting and such other diversions. The said king 'Priyadarsin, Beloved of the gods, then he had been anointed ten years, proceeded to Sambodhi (i.e. the holy spot of the Botree). There by it turned out to be a pilgrimage of piety.....[1] From the above edict it becomes obvious that "Aśoka started for Sambodhi" or "under took a pilgrimage to Sambodhi". This event occured in about 260 B.C.[2] "Going to Sambodhi" may, according to D.R. Bhandarkar, mean a physical process and indicate a journey to the place of enlightenment, i.e. to Buddhagaya. The above edict mentioned that he visited Buddhagaya in the tenth year of his coronation.[3]

In other words, the word of the Buddha recommending the Bodhi *mandala* as one of the four places "worth visiting

by a lay devotee, full of faith" remained just a pious wish which was given a practical effect for the first time by king Aśoka, who raised Bodhgaya to a distinct place of regular Buddhist pilgrimage through his visit to Sambodhi when he had been consecrated for ten years, as in evident from the Rock edict which records his earliest and pious tours (dharma-yatra).[4] He also under took a second pious tour when he had been consecrated for twenty years. In the course of this tour he visited Lumbinigram, Bodhgaya, Sarnath and Kusinara among others which is fully testified to by the Rummendei and Nigalisagara pillar Inscriptions as well as the *Divyāvadāna*. Though from Rock edict VIII it does not appear that he set up any work of art at Bodhgaya to commemorate his visit thereto, from the edifying legend at Lumbini, however it is expressly clear that the pious king set up at each of these places a commemorative shrine, and made a gift of money.[5]

If the inscriptions from Lumbini and Nigalisagara have any indication, we can safely infer that he erected a monolith along with some other pieces of art at Bodhgaya which are now unfortunately lost. But the two bas—reliefs on the Bharhut stone railing are remarkably significant, as in both of these prominently figures an Aśokan monolith with round shaft and elephant capital standing infront of the Bo-tree just to the north-east at a short distance from it.[6] We connot doubt this faithful representation of an Asokan monolith at Bodhgaya, and thus from the Bharhut bas-reliefs we can legitimately infer that at Bodhgaya, too, Aśoka erected a remarkable monolith surmounted by the figure of a standing elephant.[7]

Hiuen-Tsang also credits Aśoka the construction of a small Vihara which was reconstructed afterwards on a larger scale. The polished stand stone slab appearing on one of the three Vajrasanas inside the present Mahabodhi temple is the whole or, part of the extra piece of work with which Aśoka honoured the holy spot of the Bo-tree.[8] This shrine

or *Vajrasana* was held in highest veneration and sanctity to which additional additions came to be made in subsequent periods by the Kushana king Huviska and others.

It is interesting to note that Fa-hian who left China in 399 A.D., and after visiting India and Ceylon (Sri-lanka) returned to his native land in 414 A.D.,[9] refers to Bodhgaya where he had come from Gaya. The account of his journey has been translated by Remusat, Beal and Giles. His narrative is brief, and the details, though few, are very interesting and important. His account of Mahabodhi is very mearge ; but it is sufficient to show that a temple of the Bodhi tree were then standing [10] His words are, "The sites of the great Pagodas have always been associated togather from the time of the Nirvana. The four great Pagodas are those erected on the place where he was born, where he obtained emancipation, where he began to preach and where he entered *Nirvana*".

From this statement it appears to be certain that there was a great Vihara of the Mahabodhi tree in existence at the time of Fa-hian's visit in 409 A.D., but the present Mahabodhi temple[11] did not exist. However, Hiuen-Tsang who left China in 629 A.D. and did not return to his country till 648 A.D., presents a grephic account of this temple, which was at this time enclosed with high and strong brick walls coated with having tiers of niches with gold images. He also found the four walls of the temple adorned with exquisite carvings of pearl springs and genii with a gilt copper amlaka on the roof.[12] He also saw three inter-connected hills all beautified with precious objects, and a passage through them communicated with the inner chamber, besides a host of other monuments.[13] Thus, a comparative study of the accounts of Fa-hian and Hiuen-Tsang would show that the Mahabodhi temple came to be built sometime between 420 A.D. to 600 A.D.[14]

Hiuen-Tsang credits a Brāhmaṇa with the reconstruction

of the original temple of Aśoka on a grand scale, and his younger brother with the excavation of the tank with 'a flowery bank' on the southern side of the great shrine, i.e., the tank now known as Buddhokhara or Buddhapokhara.[15] The Buddha image enshrined in the main hall of worship is praised as the handi work of a skilled Brahmana artist employed by the builder of the great temple.[16] Contrary to popular belief and Hiuen-Tsang's assertion, B. M. Barua believes that king Sasanka of Bengal did by no means contemplate to destory this temple now did he cause any trouble to the inmates of the Mahabodhi Samgharama; On the other hand, he was "the benevolent king under whose patronage the Bodhgaya temple was built and the Buddha-pokhara excavated with a flowery tank."[17] The arguments advanced by him in support of his contention are not very convincing and we are not in a position to come to any definite conclusion in the present state of our knowledge regarding the exact period of the reconstruction of this great temple which, as we have shown above, may be placed during the period intervening Fahian's departure (420 A.D.) and Hiuen-Tsang's arrival (600 A.D.).[18]

But the similarity of the two great temples of Nalanda and Bodhgaya, as suggested by Hiuen-Tsang, is a fair evidence that the earliest construction of the two shrines was done in about the same age.[19] The materials now available do not help us to arrive at any positive conclusion, and we can look for the earliest limits of the temple or shrine between first century B.C. first century A.D., which later came to be reconstructed during 420 to 600 A.D. Moreover, the tradition about the Brahmana brothers is also not much open to the charge of fabrication as the narrater does not give his name to take the credit of the temple nor he attributes it to some of his favourites. As a mere traditions of fact in which none took any pasticular interest, such a condition is not necessary, and this clearly shows that he is honestly reciting what he had heard, and thereby imparts to his

narration an appearance of authenticity.[20] The story besides has the support of the Burmese inscription which is of some consequence.[21]

When the temple proper came to be built on a larger scale, it had to be built precisely on a site in front of the then living Bo-tree, and as a first step towards the buiding of the present temple, the site had to be cleared of the thorns, weeds, and stamps. It seems that the roof and upper halves of the pillars of the earlier small temple had to be demolished and the sandstone railings said to have been erected by Kurang[22] had also to be dismantled. The erection of the great temple also necessiated the removal of the roof and southern row of pillars of the Jewel-walk shrine. Moreover the Monolith of Aśoka, too, had to be removed from its original place. A close study of the evailable evidences would show that the actual spot of the original Bo-tree is lying under the leasement of the present temple and just behind the ancient Vajrasana.[23] Though the whereabouts of Aśoka's monolith are yet unknown, the ancient Vajrasana and the lower part of the original small temple still exist.[24] When the present temple was being repaired in 1818 A.D., Cunningham came across the plinth of the earlier sandstone railing as well as the southern row of fixed pillar bases of the jewel-walk-shrine lying still buried and hidden under the basement of the great shrine.[25]

However, the present state of the Mahabodhi temple complex tallies so closely, as it stood in 637 A.D. as Hiuen-Tsang has described.[26] In this content Cunningham has given us his opinion as "There can be no resonable doubt that it is, in spite of all its repairs and alterations, the same building which was described by the Chinese pilgrim, as will be seen by the following comparision.

First :

The diamensions of the two temples are exactly the

same, the present building being 48′ feet square at its base, and between 160′ and 170′ feet in height. It 1861 my measurement of its height, in its broken state, was 160′ from the floor of the chamber to the top of the ruined pinnacle. It is now, after repair of the pinnacle, upwards of 170 feet.

Second :

It is built of burnt bricks, with a coating of plaster.

Third :

The four faces present several tiers of niches, rising one above the other, each of which, no doubt, once held a Buddhist figure. Only three figures remained when I first saw the building.

Fourth :

The entrance on the eastern side was certainly an addition to the original building, as its courses of bricks did not correspond with these of the main body of the temple.[27]

Thus, the Mahabodhi temple at Bodhgaya as it stands now, is approximately 160 feet high and consists of a straightedged pyramidal lower base surrounded by a stupa, complete with the harmika and the hati,[28] with a fluted amalaka-like lower member and with angle-amalakas of the corners demercating the different stages in the ascent of the tower. The entrance porch, evidently later than the original temple, is on the east. Each of the four sides of the tower presents several tiers and niches, while the front face has a tall lancet opening for the admission of light into the sanctum. At the base of the tower, raises a turret at the four corners of which there is a replica in miniature of the main spire.[29] Towering against the sky, this loafty and massive pile dominates the entire landscape all around and draws visitors and pilgrims from all parts of the world.[30] The temple enshrines the great gilded figure of the Blessed one in the earth-touching attitude (*bhūmisparsa mudrā*) which symbolises the supreme

event of enlightenment. Around the temple lie innumerable remains of which the most important are the portions of the stone-railing which probably surrounded the original shrine. These stone railings represent two different periods of construction, the former going back to about 2nd century B.C. and the latter to the Gupta period. Interesting carvings still adorn these rail posts, and of these the figures of Indra as Santi and that of Surya (sun-god) drawn by four horsed chariot[31] are note worthy. Beautiful sculptures and richly decorated votive stupas, scattered all around, still continue to attract the admiring gaze of the pilgrims and visitors who flock to this venerable shrine.[32]

The *She-Kia-fang-Che* an important Chinese account on India, supplemented the Si-yu-ki and the life of its author had supplied with the description as he had heard it from Hiuen-Tsang.[33] recorded : "The Bodhi tree is surrounded by brick wall high and strong. It is long from east to west and has a circuit of 540 paces. Rare trees with their renowned flowers connect their shade and cost their shadow. The main gate opens to the east facing the Niranjana river. By the side of the southern gate there is a large flower tank. The western side is firmly blocked. The northern gate leads to the Mahavihara. Within the walled courtyard there are holy traces, Stupas. Viharas extending in all directions, connected with each other. The Vajrasana is right in the middle of the enclosure. When the Bhadrakalpa was first reaching perfection, it appeared with the great earth. It is in the middle of the *Mahāsahasralokadhātu*. It goes down to the extremity of the golden wheel and upwards it reaches the horizon of the earth. The Vajrasana is more than 100 paces in circuit one thousand Buddhas sat here and entered the Vajrasamadhi ; hence the name. It is the place where they attained the *tao*. It is also called Bodhimanda. When the great earth is shaken this place is not moved. When after Budhas attainment of enlightenment the law started decaying. Earth and dust covered this place and the original basement was

not seen. On ascertaining the words of Buddha by tradition it was marked by two images of Avlokiteśvara Bodhisattava. Thus the south-North boundary was fixed. The images face south and are in sitting posture. The Ki (Si-yu-ki) says—'As soon as these images disappear the law of Buddha will get destroyed.' The image at the south angle is buried upto its breast.

To the east of the tree there is a brick built monastery more than 160 feet high. Its basement is more than 20 paces in breadth. There is a stone railing Kou-lan 10 feet high, surrounding it. In every storey, on four sides, there are golden images. On four sides are engraved the heavenly Rāshis. On the top there is an Amlalaka fruit in gilt copper. These are called 'Precious vase' and 'precious terrace.'

On its south-eastern side there is a tower in three storeys. Its shape is peculiar and decorated with gold and silver engravings. There are doors in all the three storeys and inside the niches on the left and right there are images of Avlokiteśvara and Maitreya respectively. They are made of white silver and are about 10 feet high. King Aśoka built it. The monastery was at first small and it was then made broad. Inside there is the image of attainment of Bodhi. A Brahmana in response to the call came and built it. He alone went inside the monastery with scented clay and a lamp. The door was to remain closed for six months for completing the image. When four days only remained the monks out of astonishment opened the door to see what was happening and saw the beautifully decorated image. It was in a sitting posture with face turned to the east. The right foot was upper most, the left hand resting and the right hand falling down—but the (artist) could not be found. The seat was 4 feet 2 inches high, and 12 feet 5 inches broad. The image was 11 feet 5 inches high ; The two knees were 8 feet 8 inches apart and the two shoulders 6 feet 2 inches. The signs were perfectly done. Above the right breast it was not

completely rounded off. They filled it with different kinds of precious things, but from a distance it looked unifished. There was Bhikshu who had a dream about the artisan. Fearing that other artists will be incapable of conceiving it. I 'myelf painted it.' 'The right hand hangs down. Buddha is speaking to Mara by pointing out to the earth as his witness.'

Buddha on attaing Bodhi meditated for seven days. To the north of the tree there is a place where Buddha walked up and down for seven days. It is about 10 paces for going and coming from the north to south different flowers sprang up under his foot steps and there were 18 of them. Afterwards this step was covered by a brick wall more than three feet high. There is a belief according to which the length and shortness of a man's life can be shown in it. After making a sincere vow take a rope and measure the wall. If it is long the life inceases and if it decreases life becomes short. To its north on the left side of the road there is a large rock on the top of which there is a large manastery. Here is an image of Buddha with eyes raised up and contemplating the Bodhi tree. He did not remove his eyes fo seven days. In a large monastery to the west of the tree there is an image in Bronze. It stands with its face to the east and is ornamented with rare jewels. In front of it there is a blue stone with wonderful marks of beauty. On the first day of his enlightenment the Brahmaraja made a seven jewelled seat. While at this place he was in his meditation for 7 days. a mysterious light went forth towards the tree. Now the jewels have changed into stones. To the south of the tree there is a stupa more than 100 feet high. Formerly, Boddhisattva after bathing in the river while searching for a seat thought of grass. Sakra Devendra then changed himself into a man who paid homage to Buddha at this place with Kushe grass. King Aśoka built a stupa to mark the spot. Further to the north east, there is a stupa. It was from this

place that Buddha at the time of getting the fruit of enlightenment saw a flock of blue birds going round him in an auspicious manner.

To the east of the tree there is a stupa on each side of the high road. This is the place where Buddha resisted the temptation of the Mara. To the north west to the tree inside a Vihara (there is the image of) Kasyapa Buddha which at times emits bright light. The people say—'If a man walks round it seven times with a sincere mind he obtains the knowledge of his previous life'. Besides, to the north-west of the enclosure (of the tree) there is another stupa. It is made of Saffron plaster. It is more than fourty fee high. In side of the Ni-Kiu-lu there is a stupa. Inside the Sangharam there is seat. Formerly at the time of Buddha s obtaining the fruit of enlightenment Maha Brahmaraja requested him here to turn the wheel of law. Inside the enclosure in all the four corners there are stupas. Formerly Buddha after getting the (kusa) grass proceeded towards the tree. When he came to its south west the earth trembled. The earth trembled similarly while he went to north-west, north-east and south-east. But when he reached the north-west he sat down under the tee. He set on the Vajrasana facing the east. The earth then remained peaceful. So, the stupas were established to mark the spot. To the south-west, outside the enclosure is the place where the house of the two shepherd girls stood. By its side is the place where Buddha recienled the boiled rice. In all these places stupas have been erected to mark the events. Outside the southern gate of the tree there is a large tank. It has a circuit of more than 700 paces. Its water is clear and is infested by fishes and dragons.

Further to the south inside a forest there is a stupa on the place where Buddha received the old garments given by the poor mother. To the east of the Phantom lake there is the Dragon lake in the forest. Its water is clear black, black

and sweet to the taste. On its western bank there is a Samgharam in which there is an image. Buddha, when he first attained Bodhi sat at this place for seven days and entered into Samadhi. The king of the dragon encircled him in seven coils. He produced many hoods loving Buddha like a parasol on this spot. To the east of the Dragon lake there is a Sangharama in the forest. It contains an image of Buddha representing as thin as withered away. By its side is the place where Buddha walked up and down more than 70 paces. On its north and south, on each side, there is a Pi-Po-Lo tree, which obeyed the order as to be appear and disappear for a long time. Besides, there is a stupa at the place where the five menlived. To its south-east there is a stupa at the place where Buddha entered the Ni-lien river to bathe. Nearby on the bank of the river, is the place where Buddha ate the milk-rice. He obtained the emancipation underneath the Bodhi-tree. Near it there are two stupas. A noble man offered him honey and tried grains at this place. There is stupa to the south-east of the tree. The four Devarajas came from four directions each holding a golden bowl and all sorts of jewelled bowls. Buddha did not take any of them. Then each of them brought a stone bowl of deep blue colour and transbcent. He then joined them together into one and accepted the same. So, the four boarders are seen outside one bowl. Near this place (where the bowl was offered) there is a stupa. After his enlightenment he spoke the law for his mother here. He exhibited various spiritual changes in this place. He converted Yu lu (Uruvila) kasyapa with his 100 men at this place. To its north-west is the place where he converted the fiery dragon. To the south of the tank of Mu-chen (Mucilinda) dragon is the place where Kasyapa said that Buddha was covered by flood. Mara tried to frightend Buddha at this place. Every where stupas have been founded to mark the places, out side the northern gate of the enclosure of the tree there is the Mahabodhi monastery. It has six halls with three storeyed observation towers.

It is surrounded by a wall of about 50 feet high. There are images of Buddha in copper, gold and silver artistically decorated. The stupas are high and broad and contain relics of Buddha which are large like the joints of figures. They are shining white, smooth and translucent. The inner relics are big like true pearls of a bluish red tint. Every year on the day of the full moon when Buddha displayed great spiritual charges the relics are taken out. The relics occasionally emit bright light and there are showers of flowers. These raise great and profound faith. Infront of the Bodhi tree upto a distance of about 10 Li the holy signs are too numerous to be fully described. Every year when the Bhikhsus break up their varsa, religious persons come from directions in large number. During seven days and nights they offer incense, flower, dance and music in the forest. All monks of India enter Varsavasa on the 16th day of the 5th month of the Chinese calender. But it may be changed and there is no fixed rule. To the north of the snow mountains there are countries where they practise it in spring or Autumn. The sense is that it should be observed in the most rainy and hot in the year for three months. It is however, sinful to practise travelling during the period of three months.

However, the construction of this great and most sacred temple took place keeping constantly those architectural remains which were described above, not in one effort. Though the process of destruction, construction, addition and preservation continued till the sixteenth century according to Buddhist attitude and for Buddhists. But in the middle of 17th and 18th centuries there was an abode of Saiva Sangasi named Gossain Ghamandi Guri, hence close to the ruins of the temple, he had erected a small monastery gathering round him a number of followers and in course of time his monastery grew in importance until in a few generations it developed into the present enoromous math of the Mahantas. According to a memorandum supplied to R. L.

Mitra by the then Head Mahanta, Dhamandinatha, a mendicant of the order of Giri, one of the tenorders of the followers of Śankracharyas saivite school, first took up his abode in the village of Buddhagaya, and built a small monastery for the accommodation of the itinerant members of his order. The Buddhagaya temple at that time had no priest, nor any worshipper ; and such an appropriation of it by a saintly in a small village during the Muslim rule was an act which none would question. It is said that he got from the emperor Shah Alam a firman to hold the Buddha-Gaya temple in his possession, and to be recognised as the chief Mahanta of the place. Chaitanya the successor of Mahanta was followed by his renowned disciple Mahadeva who was famous for his learning and austerity, had been worshipping Mahadevi for several years infront of the Mahabodhi temple, and through her special favours became able to establish Śiva-linga and the large monastery of his order.

After, a long struggle and appeal it is justified that the people of both the religions, i.e., Hindus and Buddhist may worship and pray irresistantly. In this context Rabindra Nath Tagore expressed his openion, on the question of the right of possession of the Buddhagaya temple :—"I am sure it will be admitted by all Hindus who are true to their own ideals that it is an intolerable wrong to allow the temple raised on the spot where Lord Buddha attained his enlightement to remain under the control of a rival sect which can neither have an intimate knowledge of nor sympathy for, the Buddhist religion and its rites of worship. I consider it to be sacred duty for all individuals believing in freedom and justice to help to restore this historical site to the community of people who still reverently carry on that particular current of history in their own living faith."

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(B) BODHGAYA RAILING

ART :

Various scenes depicted on Bodhgaya railings occupy a glorious chapter and a greater land mark in the real of artistic activities. The beginning of such activities in Bodhgaya can be traced back to the Mauryan period, which is based on indigenous style, both in terms of contents and form, providing a new base to the artistic and iconographic features.

Bodhgaya was one of the main centres of art. The low relief carved on the railings at Bodhgaya has been provided with the carvings representing incidents connected with the life of Buddha and the Jataka stories. The overall treatment of these stories is very impressive and show rare kind of clarity.[1] One of the reliefs shows the Bodhi tree surrounded by a railing. Another relief represents Surya, standing on a one wheeled chariot drawn by four horses. A number of *Rashis* has also been found on Bodhgaya railings. Other notable figures include winged animals, fish tailed human beings, Yakshas, the scene showing Gajalakshmi, tree nymph, tri-ratna, Dharmachakra,[2] etc.

The remains of stone Rails found at Bodhgaya consist of several set, some made of sandstone and others of granite. They were also of different sizes. V.A. Smith believed that there were two or three different sets of rails. According to Cunningham, the rails covered a space of 145 feet by 108 feet; and is so, must have gone not only around the tree but also a big piece of land containing many other structures.[3]

On the basis of Hiuen-Tsang's testimony it is suggested that Aśoka got constructed a small shrine on the spot where the Buddha attained enlightenment.[4] It is intresting to note that among the bas-reliefs of the ruined stupa at Bharhut there were two sculptural representations of this small shrine with the Bodhi three behind and one of them contained the legend "The Bodhi" tree of the Blessed Shakya Muni.[5] These bas-reliefs, however, suggest that the original shrine was an open pavilion supported on pillars.

The Vajrasana was in the center, decorated in front with a set of four pillars, which was adorned on each side with a combined symbol of the triratnas, and a *Dharmachakra*, standing on the top of short pillar.[6] Thus, the bas-reliefs apparently represented the original structure is partially corroborated by the discovery in situ.

Rock edict VIII of Aśoka informs us that he "undertook a pilgrimage to Sambodhi" ten years after his coronation,[7] and probably a little later erected monolithic pillars with beautiful carvings of elephant, lotus etc. to commemorate the occasion. One of those pillars is still standing near the Bodhi tree.

The art of low-reliefs carved on the railing at Bodhgaya, generally called the Aśoka railing,[8] can be placed both chonologically and stylistically between Bharbut and Sanchi stone reliefs. The inscriptions engraved on the railings mention the gift of Kurangi, queen of king Indragnimitra and Nagadevi, queen of Brahmamitra. The inscriptions, thus, further testify that the reliefs on the railing belong to the end of the second century B.C. It is true that originally an inclosure with a circuit of about 258 feet was built at the site by Aśoka, but this enclosure was made of brick which still exist in the foundation. Later on this was replaced by a Palisade (Vedika) or a railing consisting of the uprights (thaba), the cross-bars (suchi) and the copings (Usnisa). The railings are quite similar to those at Bharhut and Sanchi. Incidentally, all the pillars and railings are not made of the same material. Some of the pices are made of carse granite, while the rest are of Kaimur sandstone. But the carvings on the standstone pillars as well as on the granite are also not similar in style, although V.A. Smith regards them as similar in style, irrespective of the material. The carvings on the sandstone (material) pillars are definitely earlier but the reliefs on the granite stone are of the Gupta period. The is particularly proved by the figures of Garudas and *kirttimukhas*[9] which are typical of the Gupta art, as we find them at Sarnath and other Gupta sites in India.

The entire railing shows varied subjects treated in low-relief a though friezes and rosettes of lotus flower can specially be noticed on the copings and uprights of the pillars. Some of the scenes have also been depicted on the copings. There are also hosts of scenes depicting the Jataka stories, although only a restricted number of them can be identified with certainty. Besides the Jatakas, there are a few scenes dealing with the life of the Buddha and the worship of the Bodhi-tree, the Bodhi-Manda, the stupa, the *Dharamchakra* of wheel, the *triratna* on the *Bodhimanda* etc. Other subjects treated in the relief include mithuna figures, winged lion, winged horse, winged elephant, fish tailed human beings (nara-machcha), bull, ram goat, makara and several other fabulous animals.[10] Special mentain may be made of the scene showing a sacred tree enclosed by a railing. Other notable figures include a Yaksa, the tree nymph climbing a tree with the help of a Yaksa seated below. The figure of Indra, the scene showing Gajalakshmi and, last but not the least the Surya in relief.

There are a few scenes connected with the life of the Buddha which have been depicted on the railings. The chief among them is the story of the purchase of the Jetavana.[11] However, here only one aspect of the story, namely, the labourers covering the area within the garden with a layer of crores of coins in fulfilment of the terms of sale and purchase has been shown. The banker is absent but the employees are spreading out the bed-coins. Here the story has been treated in an abreviated form and the main figure has not been shown repeatedly unlike the representation of the Jetavana scene at Bharhut.[12] It is taken for granted that the story is already known to the people visiting the shrine and only the most important part of the story has been depicted to highlight the main story connected with the Jetavana.

However, one can not be sure whether the scene showing the Naga king[13] paying homage to the Buddha actually represents the scene of *Elapatra* (Naga) paying homage to the Buddha, because the tree shown in the relief

can not be identified with certainty as Sirisa (acacia) or *Nyagrodha* (*banyan*). One may, therefore, take it to be a scene representing either *Elapatra* paying homage to the Buddha or Brahma supplicating the Buddha for the proclamation of the new faith to the world at large. In the actual relief, a human figure has been shown offering homage before a vacant seat with the sacred tree in the background and a flying kinnara can be noticed towards the right side holding a garland in both his hands.

There is another interesting scene in the Bodhgaya relief which depicts the story of the Buddha and a plough man.[14] The story is based on an incident connected with the Buddha's life in the *Suttanipata*.[15] The Buddha according to the story, had prepared the ground for the conversion of a Brahmin cultivator of Sravothi by paying him a timely visit when he was engaged in ploughing his wheat field on the bank of the Achiravati in the vicinity of the Jetavana. Here, in the scene, the plough man has been shown holding a stick in his left hand and his right hand is placed over the Yoke which is tied to a pair of bullocks. A vacant seat indicative of the Buddha's presence can be noticed towards the right. Thus, the Buddha story does not occupy a prominent place on the Bodhgaya railing as we notice on the Bharhut railings, and popular stories have instead been depicted on the medallions and the copings. But the mode of treatment differs markedly from the Bharhut relief in as much as the story has been represented in an abbreviated form without taking recourse to the formula of depicting the main figures repeatedly in the same scene.[16] Since apart of the story received the artists attention, care has been taken to depict a human figure in a more natural and relaxed posture.

There are, however, a fairly good number of stories connected with the Jatakas, which have been depicted on the Bodhgaya railings. These popular stories connected with the Jatakas, however, can not be identified with certainly, partly because the inscribed labels, as noticed at the Bharhut railings, are missing here and further only some

portions of the stories have been depicted in the scene, and this creates further difficulty in identifying the scenes correctly in terms of the Jataka stories. This is mainly responsible for the conflicting opinions held by different scholars in regard to the scenes connected with the Jataka stories.

We start, now further consideration of the scenes with boat on behalf of the Jataka, which are depicted on the Bodhgaya railings. This refers, however three persons, of whom one is standing near the helm, the second poleing the boat with a pole and third probably prostrating before something sacred. The boat as such is shown passing through a sheet of water overgrown with lotus plants.[17] Now, this simple boat scene depicted on the railing has been interpreted different by Barua and Coomaraswamy. Comaraswamy[18] is definitely of the view that the scene dipicts the story of Jatila Kasyapa going in a boat along with a disciple to save the Buddha from the flood in the river Neranjana. Brua,[19] however, on the other hand, regards the scene as representing the story of Silanisamsa Jataka which is mainly connected with the events in the life of a disciple of the Buddha. According to the Jataka story, a disciple of the Buddha, while going in the company of a barber, faced the worst trouble when the ship wrecked in the mid ocean. It was largely to the blessing of the Triratna that a Nagaraja came before him transformed in the shape of a great ship and a Samuddadevata as helm-man. Here the middle helmsman may be identified as Samuddha-devata but the actions of the two other persons is not clear in term of the Jataka-story. Even the scene does not show any sign of mid-ocean and instead we notice a boat passing through water over grown with lotus. Thus, the two versions are complately different and as such it becomes difficult to identify the above scene with the Jataka story.

In the next railing, the same difficulty arises in the case of the scene where an elephant has been shown standing with its trunk turned towards its mouth.[20] A man is shown

seated holding a bamboo-pole like rod which is held slantingly. The attitude of the elephant shows that it has restrained its motion. But the man with the weapon probably looks perplexed at the sudden approach of the elephant. Barua is of the openion that the above scene depicts the story of the Kasaya Jataka.[21] According to the Jataka story, an elephant killer lay in wait in the garb of an ascetic. Of course, the elephant killer has been described as one putting on an Yellow robe in the guise of *Pachch-ka-Buddha*! But, the main point of the story is the dress of the elephant killer and one can not make out at least from the scene wheather the person wears a cloth or not.[22] Hence, we can not identify the human figure with *Pachcheka-Buddha*. Thus, the important detail of the story is somehow missing in the scene.

In the next scene of the railing,[23] a king has been shown seated in front with his right hand resting on his right knee with the leg drawn up while the left hand of the king is shown extended to received some object which is being brought in a *bahangi* pole carried by a bearer. A female attendant has been shown behind the king with the usual chauri. The scene has been interpreted differently by Barua, Coomaraswamy and Cunningham. Cunningham takes it to be a domestic scene. On the other hand Barua[24] says that the scene represents the story of the *Somadatta* Jataka. Some how in the above Jataka story, we do not come across any description about a man meeting a king with a plough on his shoulder. Coomaraswamy,[25] however is of the view that the object brought before the king is an elephant tush and on this basis he suggests that the relief depicts the story of the Chhaddanta-Jataka. In this scene, however, not only the queen is absent, but one can not even be sure that the object brought before the king is an elephant tusk. Keeping in view the above facts, one can not suggest in very clear term that the scene represents the story of a particular Jataka as suggested by Barua and Coomaraswamy.

There is, however one particular scene[26] in the Bodhgaya railing which, more or less, tallies with a particular Jataka

story. The Jataka story,[27] as given in the *Asitabhu-Jataka* and rendered in the scene on the railing, clearly shows the point of resemblence between the two. According to the Jataka story, a prince takes fancy for a wood land spirit and as a result he lost his loving wife. In the scene one can notice a man standing in the middle with a woman on both the sides. One of the female figures has been shown hanging over the man with her arms lying over his left shoulder, whereas the other female has been shown standing to his right. The attitude of the man including his hand as shown in the relief shows as if he is trying to drive her off. Here, the story, as given in the Jataka and the rendering of the scene,[28] shows closer resemblence in as much as the man has been shown in an indulgent mood in his dealings with the first women and he appears to be negligent in his dealings with the second woman.

In another relief panel, a king has been shown seated on a throne with his left hand upraised. A female attendant has been shown behind the king holding a chouri. The woman in the middle is holding a plate containing some eatables. Another woman standing next to him has been shown carrying a basket.[29] Barua has tried to suggest that the story represented in the scene is that of the *Sujata-Jataka*.[30] According to aforesaid Jataka story, a king took fancy for the daughter of a fruit seller when she went on her daily round of selling fruits. The king finally made her his queen. One day while the king was taking the same fruit in a golden plate, the queen pretended not to recognise the fruit. But in the Jataka story, we do not find any episode pertaining to a plate with estables being offered to the king. On the above ground alone, it has, however, been suggested that the scene does not represent the story of the *Sujata-Jataka*. Coomaraswamy has tried to identify the scene with the *Kinnara-Jataka*.[31] But the female figure does not bear any sign of a Kinnara on her body. Hence, it is difficult, to identify the scene with the story of the *Kinnara-Jataka*.

Now we come to the next railing where arises the same difficulty to identify the scene, where a man and woman

have been shown side by side[32] in the form of each other. The man appears to be a ministerial with a harp in his left hand and the woman with her hand upraised appears to be a respectable female personality. Barua has tried to suggest that the scene represents the story of the *Sussondi-Jataka*[33]. But some how the above scene does not very much tally with the story as given in the Jataka itself.

In another scene, which is depicted on the upper part of the pillar, a man and a woman have been shown seated on a bed stead.[34] The man is making some request to the lady with folded hands. The woman on the other hand is leading on the maid who is standing beside her with her right hand placed on the knee. On the basis of the attitude of the woman, it has been suggested that she appears to be dissatisfied with him. A water jug and a foot-stool are also placed over the floor. Since the man has been shown making entreaties to the woman with folded hands, this has led Barua[35] to suggest that the scene depicts the story of the *Atthana-Jataka*. The story of the *Atthana-Jataka* deals with the life of a courtesun who used to receive the merchant (*Setthi*) with her fee of one thousand pieces per night. Once she declined to recieve him when he had come without the fee. Inspite of repeated entreaties of the merchant, the courtesan asked the maid to turn him out. The merchant felt, extremly disappointed and ultimately turned an ascetic. Here, what is depicted in the scene may have something to do with the episode as given in the *Pochchuppannavatthu* of the *Atthana-Jataka*. Coomaraswamy, however, does not regard it as the Jataka scene.[36]

In the next railing, there is another interesting scene, where a horse-traced woman has been shown seizing the left hand of a woman by her right hand from a rocky place.[37] Coomaraswamy is of the view that the above scene represents the story of the *Padakusalamanava-Jataka*.[38] Barua has suggested that the same story has been treated in the other two scenes. The horse faced woman has been shown in a very small pavilion, playing a square-board game

along with the person who is not under her control.[39] In another scene[40] a woman standing in the middle has been shown with her left foot placed across her right and her two hands remained joined and raised above head. She is facing a man whose left hand is placed on her right arm. A playful boy also figures in the scene. But in the Jataka story, the actual hero is the playful boy who was specially gifted in recognising a person. All the three representations as shown in the three scenes do not tally with the Jataka story excepting the fact that in one of the scenes, the playful boy has merely been shown. As to the last scene where a female figure facing a man keeps her left hand on his right arm, Coomaraswamy[41] is of the openion that it is merely of erotic significance.

In another scene[42] of the railing at Bodhgaya, a hermit has been shown seated in front of a hut and his body and left knee have been tied together with a nose of string (Yogapatta). The hut has been shown on bank of a lotus tank and an alms-bowl can be noticed on the ground to the left of the hermit. The hermit is frightened at the sight of the tiger that has emerged from the wood and stands before him. Barua has tried to identity the scene with the *Tittira-Jataka*,[43] but strangely enough, the above Jataka does not refer to any incident pointing to the meeting of the ascetic with the tiger and on this ground one may suggest that the above scene does not tally with the story of the Jataka.

There is another scene in the Bodhgaya relief panel which has been identified by Barua with that of the *Rohanta-miga-Jataka*.[44] In the panel, a goat has been shown standing on a high pedestal and a boy stands in front of the seat and a lady can be noticed standing at a distance watching them. But in the actual Jataka story, the reference is made to a gold coloured stag (miga) sitting on a golden seat and now here in the story the three characters appears together. Here instead of the miga there is a goat standing before an altar, and Coomaraswamy might be right in suggesting that the goat on the altar was meant to be sacrificed for the god.[45]

One may further refer the scene where a woman has been shown playing on a pipe, while another woman is holding up her right hand as if marking time.[47] Only the hand of the third woman can be seen. A palm tree has also been shown in the back ground. Barua[48] and Coomerswamy[49] have explained the scene differently in the light of the *Kimchhanda-Jataka* and the *Kinnara-Jataka* respectively. But both the explanation do not appear to be convincing. The *Kinnara-Jataka* scene at Bharhut[50] clearly shows a human king and a Kinnara couple but the Kinnaras are not shown performing any dance before the king. Now, the female figures in the Bodhgaya scene can not be regarded as Kinnaras and moreover the king is absent in the scene as we notice in the relief panel of Bharhut. Even Barua's explanation, in the light of the *Kimchhanda-Jataka,* does not take us very far because in the *Kimchhanda-Jataka* the main hero is the king who does not figure in the Bodhgaya scene. But the Bodhgaya scene may have something to do with the obous Jataka if we take into account the palm Aree and the female figure playing pipe and marking time. According to the story, the purohita, who was reborn as palm tree,[51] suffered pains all day lent enjoyed the night being surrounded by an escort of sixteen thousand dancing nymphs. Here only one aspect of the story may be explained in the light of the scene but the king who is the main hero comes in the way of the identification of the scene with the above Jataka.

In the other scene, a man has been shown forcibly held of a lady, who is trying to escape from his clutches. Here the man is putting up one end of her cloth, while the woman is turning him away.[52] Barua suggests that the scene in question represents the story of the *Sambuta-Jataka,*[53] According to the Jataka story one princess Sambuta while returning in the evening, came in the grip of a lustful demon. She made a hard struggle to escape, but it proved all in vain. Ultimately, her honour was saved by the timely intervention of Sakra. Coomaraswamy does not

regard it as a Jataka scene and consider it to be the representation of an erotic scene.[54]

In another two scenes[55] of the railing in the similar nature, a man and woman have been shown standing side by side. In the lower one, a man has been shown with a folded hands beside the water-Jug of a hermit and the woman is hiding her mouth with her left hand palm and keeping her right hand crossing her body. The woman is holding a harp by her right side as in the upper one scene, the man and woman are in the clasp of each other. Barua has tried to explain the above two scenes in terms of the story of the *Alambusa-Jataka*[56] which does not appear to be convincing. The two scenes may be of erotic significance.

In another scene of the railing, a man is seated cross legged on a square seat under a Sala tree with the right hand pointed towards a cave-like dwelling. Barua has attempted to explain it in the light of the *Sonaka-Jataka.*[57] Where a man is seated in the aforesaid scene.[58] The edges of the terrace are treated with the device of a Buddhist railing which is high enough to require two slabs of stone to step over it. But in the Jataka story, the king is the hero and a friend of Sonaka. In the relief, however, the king is not shown at all and only a person seated on the ground may be noticed talking to some one who conceals himself in the camp like dwelling. If is quite possible that the scene may have some relation with the incident connected with the life of the Buddha, although Coomaraswamy does not consider it that way and merely mentions it as a non Jataka story scene.[59]

But the most interesting among the so-called Jataka scene is the one treated on a corner pillar of a railing.[60] The entire scene has been treated in three parts namely the upper, the middle and the lower portions of the corner pillar. In the upper part, some objects like flowers or leaves have been shown. In the middle, there are thirteen figures and the majority of them are looking towards the central portion and some are shown holding garlands. In the lower portions, two small figures of children can be seen playing before them. Now the

entire scene as treated in three parts has been explained by Barua in terms of the episode of the *Sudhabhojana-Jataka*.[61] According to Barua, the upper part of the scene shows the lotus-lake with four maidens (Asa, Sraddha, Sri and Hari) ; one of the maidens being shown on one side and the remaining three on the other side. The scene in question, according to Barua, represents the four Graces coming to the lake for leathing. In the middle part, four maidens have been shown on the left side of the lake claiming with folded hands something from the hand of a man who stands at some distance facing them. This scene, according to Barua shows the four Graces contesting for the prize of ambrosia. In the lower part of the panel there are two female figure and a man is handing over something to the maiden.[62] This particular scene, according to Barua presents the sage awarding the prize to the Grace whose claim is superior to those of the rest. It has, however, been suggested that all the figures shown in the scene, can not be separated excepting the two small figures in the lower part of the panel. All the other figures are engaged in the same manner. But the two small figures, which are regarded by Barua as representing the sage and the maiden, can not be compared with the man and one of the maidens who appears in the upper part. Besides the man does not look like an ascetic. Coomaraswamy has interpreted the above scene differently. The very first scene, according to Coomaraswamy,[63] shows Vessontara leaving his palace with his wife and children before the audience. But here the question arises as to why have the rocky scene and the big mango tree been shown. Further, the two front female and male figure, who are regarded as persons of very great importance, do not appear to be very convincing. The dresses of the figures are in no way different from others.[64] It is, therefore, doubtful whether the scene represents the *Vessantara-Jataka* as suggested by Coomaraswamy.

In the next railing, there is another scene depecting a tree with two human arms offering a plateo with food and water pitcher towards a man standing in front of a tree.[65] This particular scene has been explained differently by different

scholars. Barua has taken it to be the representation of the *Vessantara-Jataka*.[66] Cunninghum[67] regards it as the representation of the *Kalpadruma*, a particular tree in the *Svarga*, the paradise of Indra, where as Block[68] consider it as the representation of the tree-spirit offering food and drink to the Bodhisattava. Coomaraswamy, however, states that the scene depicts the story of the *Mahavanija-Jataka*.[69] Bloch's view may not be correct because the actual figure of Bodhisattva in the present birth is never seen or represented by the artists of the first century B.C. Barua's identification with the *Vessantara-Jataka* seems to be rather farfetched and he himself admits that the explanation is not very satisfactory. Cunninghums interpretation of the scene as the Kalpadruma is also not very convincing, although what the relief shows in the human-like tree which offers food and drink to a man. It is just possible that the above scene may be the representation of a certain myth connected with the Rukkha-devata. Thus the relief in question is not in any way connected with the Jataka.

There is, however, another scene depicted on Bodhgaya railing which has been regarded as the representation of the Jataka story, both by Barua[70] and Coomaraswamy.[71] The scene shows two box-like receptacles resting on the pilapters of which the receptacle on the left is placed under the two Umbrellas, whether as the other one on the right has been shown under the three umbrellas. In the upper top, one can notice two Bodhi-trees inside the enclosure.[72] Two spouted Jug can also be noticed. Barua has identified the scene with the episode of the plantation of the Bodhirukkha as given in the *Kalingabodhi-Jataka* which gives an account of the miraculous growth of the Bodhi tree. Barua further suggests that the scene refers to the plantation of the seed of the Bodhirukkha by pouring water at the gate of the Jetavana by the elder Ananda. This may not be correct because we do not find other details as given in the Kalinga *bodhi-Jataka*. Coomaraswamy's interpretation also may not be correct because the scene appears to be of symbolic significance and it may not have any relation with the Jataka story.

There is another scene[73] where a standing elephant has been shown on the right side. The left side of the relief panel is badly broken. One cannot, however, fail to recognise the feet of a man who holds something in his hand. Coomaraswamy is of the opinion that the object held by the man is a saw and the scene may be identified with the story of the *Chhanddanta-Jataka*.[74] Here the episode does not seem to have occured in a forest; instead we notice the event occurring inside the railing (*Vedikā*). Thus, the presence of the railing comes in the way of Coomaraswamy's identification with the *Chhandanta-Jataka*. Barua's identification of the above scene[75] in terms of the episode of the *Dhammapadatthakatha* may not also be correct because the presence of the railing shows that the episode has not occurred in the forest area. The story in the *Dhammapadatthakatha* merely points out how the prince of a king Prantapa got a magical harp and enchanted the leader of the elephants in a forest. But somehow there is no indication of a forest area in the scene and all that we notice is an elephant standing on the right and the feet of a man on the left. The portion above the feet is completely broken. One can not make out whether it represents the robe of a monk or a person holding some edged tool.

Thus, the Jataka scenes in the Bodhgaya reliefs deal mainly with a single episode or a part of the story as given in the Jatakas and sometimes the main character or hero is missing.[76] This may be due to the fact that the versions of the Jataka stories, as known to the people of this area, have been mainly treated in the reliefs. It must, however, be added that the stories treated in the reliefs show a rare kind of clarity and the overall treatment is quite pleasing and impressive.

Apart from Jataka scene, there are also a few scenes representing sacred trees enclosed by railings. Here we may refer to an upper panel of a rail post where we notice a Bodhi-tree surrounded by a quadrangular railing.[77] The tree has beautiful foliage as characterised by three main branches with the one in the middle and two on the two sides.[78] On both the sides of the tree, we can also notice an umbrella planted on the ground. Further, garlands can be noticed

having from the herozontal base or beams. This is one of the most beautiful representations of the Bodhi-tree encircled by a railing with an umbrella planted on each side and the garlands have been shown hanging from the horizontal beams. Here the artist has depicted the scene in such a way as if he was viewing the whole scene from the top.[79] Both the garlands and the Umbrella served as balancing factors to the Bodhi-tree enclosed within the railing.

There is another representation of the Bodhi tree showing three uniform off-shoots of the very root, and the general appearance and the foliage of the tree seem to bear resemblence with the Bodhi tree of the *Buddha-Konagamana*.[80] On both the sides of the tree one can notice the umbrella. There is a vacant seat infront.

But the most captivating of all the scenes at Bodhgaya is the *Surya* in relief. The relief in question shows the picture of a one wheeled war chariot drawn by a team of four horses, two going to the left and two to the right. The chariot has a high frame in front and a similar frame on each side. The horses are shown with waving plumes, and they have been represented in profile of three quarter view. The person standing on the front has turban as head-dress and remains standing on the force part of the chariot, holding the upper edge of the front frame with his left hand. But the right hand of the figure has been shown in a manner as if it is indicative of a charioteer holding the reins. Behind the charioteer there is a big disc-like object under an umbrella.[81] The two side figures are those of two ladies shooting arrows at men who have been shown in the relief falling down in pain from the mounds that they have received. The scene as such has been interpreted as that of Surya or the Sun god *dri* in a four horsed chariot with two attendants, although there is also suggestion to the effect that it is the representation of Sakra in war-chariot out to destroy the demons. There is also a suggestion to the effect that the scene is a mere rendering of a royal procession as described in the *Samannaphala Sutta*.[82] It must, however, be said in the words of J.N. Banerjea[83] that the

relief in question actually stands for the Sun god. But the representation of the divinity is purely Indian in character ; although in conception it may be somewhat analogous to that of the Greeks. Even about the number of horses, Banerjea says that the Ṛgvedic description of the Sun god refers to the god drawn by one, three, four or seven horses.

Among the figures, the greater inconographic interest is the figure of Indra on the north eastern corner-pillar of Bodhgaya railing[84] in which the diety is represented as a man carrying a bundle of grass in his right hand. Here Indra is shown in the guise of the Brahmana Santi in allusion to the occasion, when, disguised as a gardener, the chief of the Gods offered the straw (kusa grass) to the sublime. One on which the latter frok has seat beneath the Bodhi tree. The figure of Indra is so deeply carved as to seem almost as if steping out from the flat ground of the pillar. The sculptor was trying to suggest that the figure actually was walking forward to present the bundle of grass to the *Bodhisattva*.

Another female figurine engraved on the Bodhgaya (Museum) relief stands cross-legged. The face is turned towards the proper right side. The head is adorned with curbs of hair upon which a beaded head-dress has been fixed. Close fitting ornaments hang round her neck. The waist is decorated with gridle made of beads and floral objects. The arrangement of the lower dropery and the grooves therein are eye catching.[85] A similar female figure with her arms multilated which has been discovered from Bodhgaya. The figure seems to be domeshaped head-dress[86] and a waist girdle made of beads woved in three rows around her waist. However, the figure in question gives an impression of high sense of the artist in the art of sculpturing, lying here in relief.

The life sized sculpture of the Yaksi[87] on the Bodhgaya railing post deserves special attention. The Yaksa sitting near her right foot is helping her up and the Yaksi holding the tree-branch is trying to climb up. This, the bejewelled figure of a Yakshi[88] with her head tilted towards left is shown in the next scene, where the figure has been shown standing wearing

a waist girdle of three strings, necklace around the neck and a long chain of two strings coming up to the belly. The lower garment reaches up to the ankle and a hearey head-gear is shown over the head. What lands special charm to the figure is the heavy ornamentation : The entire scene is natural, dynamic and dramatic and is therefore impressive.

Another scene of an important railing at Bodhgaya is the story relating to the gift of the Jetavana, which appears more suggesting and appealing. In this relief panel; the gift of the Jetavana[89] has been depicted in a more effective manner without making the scene crowded. In fact, the story is rendered in a simple and direct manner leaving aside other unnecessary details. Thus, the singular achievements of t e Bodhgaya relief sculptor can be noticed in the Jetavana scene.

The speciality of the Bodhgaya is that it avoids naration by stages and an attempt is made to render the story with greater clarity and precision. In away, this leaves the earlier bias for narration and pin-points only to the essential elements of the story. Further, in almost all the relief panels dealing with the human figures, one notices that the figures move with greater case in space. The scene dealing with Mithuna figures[90] are particularly interesting because they show the figures in varied postures and bring out the mood of the characters in an effective manners.

By and large the figures in the Bodhgaya reliefs do not look flat as is the case with the Bharhut figures. In fact one may put it in the words of *Karamrischo*[91] "The movement which was only on the surface at Bharhut went to the very depth at Bodhgaya." Although Barua[92] suggests that the action here is more dramatic than in the Bharhut reliefs. As a matter of fact, the legacy of narrative art from Bharhut is also continued hero, but the narration becomes much more a breviated and there is hardly any attempt at elaboration and indulgence in over crowding as we notice at Bharhut and Sanchi, respectively. The element of drama, to which Barua alludes, is not there at all.

There were different sets of rails in the Maurya Sunga period at Bodhgaya which were fixed in various ways *i.e.*, one going round the Bodhi tree and the Vajrasana, another round the chapel known as Rajaprasada chaitya, and others also might have existed.[98]

However, the scenes depicted on Bodhgaya railings break a new ground in the field of art which we have, what we characterise as the Buddhist art, represented on the granite and sandstone railings ; they share common features to the art of Bharhut and Sanchi belonging to the Sunga period. Here Buddha has been represented only symbolically. More interesting are the figures of Surya driven on a chariot of four-horses and a few centures (Rashi figures). Solar representation along with the figures of centaurs are but unique products of the art in Bodhgaya which have not so far been met with elsewhere. Besides these, there are also remarkable figures of Indra as Shanti and a few *Yakshi* figures.

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(C) REMAINS OF THE STUPA

The stupa was the central structure of the Buddhist Chaitya or monument. Brick was the chief, if not the only, material used for its construction ; and, brick is the only remnant of the stupa. The mosim was interested in showing the brick setting at the base of the structure, his intention being to indicate the nature of the material generally used in building a stupa.[1]

In fact, the word stupa in the *Rigveda* and the later texts denotes the top-knot of hair as disignating the upper part of the head.[2] In pali, the word *thupa*, corresponding to the Sanskrit *stupa*, denotes a conical heap, 'a pile,' or mound, 'a conical or bell-shaped shrine containing a relic, 'a *dagba*. The verbal form *thupikata* means 'heaped-up', Sanskrit *Stupi-kṛita*[3], corresponding to the English tomb ; we have in Pali *tumba*, which literary means anything 'swollen of shape.' The Pali *tumba* and *tumula* on one hand, the *tumulus* on the other may be derived from one and the same root.[4] As employed in Buddhist literature, the word stupa or Thupa primarily denotes a funeral monument in the shape of a mound, a mound-shaped *Chaitya* enshrining the bodily remains or relics of a notable personage. The remains are those which are collected from the funeral *pile* after the body is cremated in it. There is no instance where the body is said to have been buried or entombed. In later Buddhist works, however, we have mention of stupas of *Dharamarajikas* built with the express purpose of marking out the site or spot where a notable incident in the life of the Buddha or in that of others took place. In other words these were moured shaped monuments,[5] the purpose of which was simply commemorative of an event or historical association. The underlying motive of all stupas is, of course, commemorative. The difference in view is one between the stupas which were built for the purpose of depositing the relics (*dhatu-nidhana*) and those which are built to mark a spot where an important historical incident took place. This having been the case, it is easy to understand that the stupas as funeral monuments may be erected in any place, in any part of the world, if the relics be

available for enshrinement, while the stupas as partly memorial shrines must be erected on the very spot bearing the particular historical association which is intended to the preserved and protected.

In all the earlier references, met within the Jatakas and the corpus of texts composing the Pali canon, the Stupa figures only as a funeral monument. The *Sujata-Jataka* (Fig. No. 352) for instance, relates that when Sujata's grandfather died, his father made a mound of earth (*nattika-thupa*) and enshrined the bodily remains of the sire.

Quite apart from the railing scheme, there is to be noticed a rough outline of Bodhgaya stupa which came to light by means of excavation, operating the mound (*katani*) Bakraur with the efforts of A.S.I. excavators, during the field season 1972-75. Bakraur is a village, where Sujata lived and where she offered milk-rice to Siddhartha during the days of seeking '*Bodhi*' or enlightenment. Bakraur (Lat 24° 42', Long. 85° 1') is situated at a distance of about one kilometre north-east of the famous Mahabodhi Temple of Bodhgaya, venarated by the Buddhists all over the world. River Niranjana, on the right bank of which Bakraur is located, flows between the small town of Bodhgaya and the ancient site. The circular mound just to the north of the village of the same name rises to a height of eleven meters, and was identified by Cunningham with that of the Stupa known to Buddhist tradition as the *Gandha-hasti-stupa*, mentioned by Hiuen-Tsang.

The location of the place where Sujata lived was not exactly known to the scholars. So in order to trace that mysterious site, K.M. Srivastava,[6] under the auspices of Archaeological Survey of India undertook the excavation. In the opinion of Cunningham the mound was called Katani. Describing the ancient site of observes, "to the eastward of Buddhagaya on the opposite bank of Phalgu or Lilajan river, and immediately to the north of the village of Bakraur, there are the ruins of a large brick-tope, with a stump of a sandstone pillar at a short distance to the northward. The ruined mound, which is called Katani, is 150 feet in diameter at base

and fifty feet high", The sandstone pillar seen by Cunningham at Bakraur is no longer traceable there. The mound was subjected to constant robbing primarily to collect brick to be used in the construction of houses. Ancient bricks used in quite a large number of houses in the village of Bakraur can be observed even now. Treasure hunting was also one of the aims of robbing.

The excavation revealed three stages of construction in the stupa. In its earliest from the *Pardakshinapatha* of the stupa was very narrow and made of burnt bricks. The width of the *Pardakshinapatha* was two meters, where as the diameter of the stupa was 55 meters there was an enclosure wall around them. Subsequently when the devotees enlarged the diameter of the stupa and also raised its height, the original *Pardakshinapatha* was covered up. An altogather new features of this stage was the five meters width and it was made of thick lime plaster,[7] railings and gateway probably in all cardinal direction were provided.

During the course of exevation, several plaques of Buddha in *Bhumi sparsa mudra* made probably of plaster, but surprisingly light in weight were the most outstanding discovery of the excavation. They were inscribed with the legend "*Devapalarajasya Sujata griha*" in characters of the Pala period. The inscription can be easily interpreted to mean that the stupa was erected during the reign of Pala ruler 'Devapala' (81[illegible]-855 A.D.) to commemorate the memory of the place where Sujata-lived and where milk rice was offered to *Bodhisattava* by her.[8] The *Bhumi Sparsa mudra* indicates that Buddha under went physical austarities inviting earth goddess to stand as a witness and protect him from the attractions of demon *Mara*. The inscribed plaques have now established that this was the place where the pious lady Sujata used to reside. A date, however, has been assigned to eight and ninth centuries A.D. ; This was the last phase of the stupa. It seems

that the original stupa was constructed during the reign of the later Guptas or a little earlier.

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(D) REMAINS OF THE MONASTERIES

The next architectural remains in importance to Bodhagaya is the Buddhist monastery, whose archaeological evidence and earliest literary notice my be found in the accounts of the Chinese pilgrims who visited India in different periods from the beginning of the 5th century A.D. down to the end of the 12th and 13th centuries. They had measured the way in terms of 'Li' which was about a third of mile.

The earliest mention regarding the monastery at Bodhgaya has been made by Fa-Hian in A.D. 409,[1] says," at the place where Buddha attained perfect wisdom there are three monasteries, all inhabited by priests. The mention of the number of (3) three monasteries is important, as Hiuen-Tsang says that this monastery had six halls by which one can understand six distinct buildings.[2] It had pavilions, three stories high, and was surounded by a wall from 30 to 40 feet high, which was richly ornamented with the relics and statue of Buddha. There were 1000 or more priests.

According to Hiuen-Tsang this monastery is attributed to a king of Ceylon,[3] and says "There was a king of Ceylon, which is a country of the southern sea, who was truthful and a believer in the law of Buddha. It happened that his brother who had become a disciple of Buddha, thinking on the holy traces of Buddha, went forth to wander through India. At all the convents he visited, he was treated unlike a foreigner. He therefore returned to Ceylon and induced the king to build convents througout all India."

Thus we have already noted that an elderly Sinhalese Buddhist monk called Mahanaman and his campanion made significant contribution to Buddhagaya as is referred to his inscription in Mahabodhi temple. This incidence had also been mentioned in the Chinese account of the travels of Wang—Hiuen-tse' who visited India in the seventh century A.D. This Chinese envoy however recorded : "Formerly, the King of Cheutzeu (Sri Lanka), named Chi-mi-Kia-po-mo, which means in Chinese language 'cloud of Merit', Sri Meghavarman, directed two Bhikshus to visit this monastery,

in which the elder monk was named Mo-ho-nan, which means 'great name' (Mahanaman) ; the other Lou-Po, which means 'giver of prophecy (Upa Sena)[4]. These two Bhikshus paid homage to the throne of diamond (Vajrasana) of the Bodhi tree. The monastery did not given them asylum and hences the two *Bhikshus* returned to their native land. The king questioned them : 'you went to pay your homage to the holy places, what good fortune do the omens declare ; O Bhikkhus! They replied : 'In the great country of *Jambu dvipa*, these 5 no spot where one can live in peace'. The king hearing these words, sent some people with precious stones to offer presents to the king (Samudragupta) San-meou-to—kiu-to. And that is why, upto this day, it is the Bhikkhus of the kingdom of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) who reside in this monastery".[5]

We have already observed that Hiuen-Tsang also referred to the monastery of the Theras at Mahabodhi as follows :—

"The younger brother of a king of Ceylon, who had gone on a pilgrimage to the holy places, met with a bad reception at the place. Returning to his native isle, he persuaded his elder brother to build, near the Bodhi druma, with the consent of the king of India, a monastery intended to give lodging to Sinhalese monks".[6] Here we find that Hiuen-Tsang did not mention the name of the king of Sri Lanka concerned, nor of his younger brother, nor of the Indian monarch, while Wang Hiuen-Tas intimated us that the Indian monarch who allowed the building of a Sinhalese Monastery at Buddha-Gaya was the great Gupta emperor Samudragupta and the Sinihalese king had the name of Sri Meghavarman indentified with the elder son of Mahasena who began his reign in or about A.C. 303 approximately. Here the mention of Samudragupta and of Sri Meghavarmana as contemproraries of Mahana man excludes henceforth the assignment of the date 269 to the Gupta era.[7] The Mahavamsa, in fact, makes Kitti Seri Meghavarmana reign from 304 to 332 A.D. ; and if Sinhalese chronology is not irreproachably accurate, it atleast give very little room for correction. In order to decide the preliminary question raised by Fleet, Barua has tried to solve the problem

and the accuracy of the Sinhalese annals, and his most likely hypothesis, therefore in the circumstances, is to consider the date 269 as expressed in the Saka era, which gives us 347 A.D. It falls thus in the reign of Samudragupta but the date, it must be confessed, is fifteen year posterior to the date of Mahanaman according to the chronology of the Mahavamsa.

Now if it is supposed that Hiuen-Tsang's six halls means six distinct monasteries, then it is evident that three of them must have been built sometime after Fa-hian's visit, Now Mahanama the Buddhist priest, and the authar of the *Mahavamsa* was a member of the Royal family of Ceylon, as he specially mentions in his Mahabodhi inscription,[9] and as he visited Mahabodhi sometime after Fa-Hian, there is no chronological difficulty to prevent the acceptance of his suggestion that he was very probably the relative of the king of Ceylon who superintended the building of the Mahabodhi Monastery.

The position of the Great Monastery to the North of the Great Temple corresponds exactly with the extensive mound known as Amar Singh's Fort.[10] The lofty walls of the Monastery, from 30 to 40 feet high, would naturally have led to its occupation as a fort after the decline of Buddhism, in the 11th century. The date of Amar Singh is still quite uncertain ; but as he is said to have been a Suvir (Suir) or aboriginal *Savara*, Cunningham has concluded that he must have held power before the rise of the Pala Rajas in 800 A.D.; in this contaxt Buchanan mentions that "mound was called Rajasthana or the palace" a name which is now confined to the group of buildings outside the north-west corner of the monastery's enclosure. Other buildings at the north-east corner are also called Ranivas, or the "Rani's Palace".[11]

The mound is from 1,500 to 2,000 feet in length from west to east, and nearly 1,000 feet in breadth from north to south. The mound still retains the general name of Mahabodhi. In November 1885 Beglar and Cunningham discovered the remains of a great monastery, with outer walls 9 feet thick, and massive round towers at the four corners. The enclosure

which surrounded the monastery had already been traced by Beglar, at a distance of about for feet all round.[12]

Cunningham has provided the plan of that monastery, vide plate no. XX of the Monastery plan in his book '*Mahabodhi*. According to him the plan of the monastery is laid out after the usual Hindu fashion as the plan consists of 36 squares, six on each side, of which the four corner squares are assigned to the correct corner towers, and the four middle squares to an open pavilion housed on pillar containing a well. Each square is 26 feet 6 inches side or 18 cubits of 17.66 inches or 16 cubits of nearly 20 inches each.

The centre of the court lies due north from the pinnacle of the Great Temple, but the east and west line of the monastery bears 96°30′ or 6°30′ south or east, that is, just half of a Nakshatra space, an amount of deviation which he has found in most ancient Buildings. Further Cunningham says that the main body of the monastery occupies the 16 interior squares, with the four outer walls placed outside. This square is 26′6″×4=106 feet. In the middle of the east and west sides there is an extension equal to two squares, each extension forming one large room. On the north and south sides there is a small extension, each forming a single small room, which, apparently, was only accessible from the inside.

The open courtyard in the middle was surrounded by a cloister suported on pillars, of which several bases were found *in situ*. On all four sides of the cloister there were small groups of cell. On the north and south sides the centre cells led into the small rooms, which were outside the main line of wall. These inner rooms probably contained statues of Buddha, but the other rooms were, no doubt, the cells or dwelling-rooms of the superior monks. Only one statue of gold and silver, is mentioned by Hiuen-Tsang, and this probably occupied the outer cell on the north side, with this middle cell as a hall infront of it. The outer cell on the south side may have been the Treasury and Relic Chamber of the monastery. The remaining chambers on the ground floor could not have accommodated more than 16 monks. A second

storey might have held 20 more, and if there had been a third storey the whole number of cells would not have held more than 56 monks. Cunningham concludes, therefore, that the lower order of priests most have been lodged in chambers arranged inside the walls of the surrounding enclosure, which was about 400 feet square. As the wall of this enclosure is said by Hiuen-Tsang to have been from 30 to 40 feet in height, there may have been three storeys of chambers ; and, as each side of the enclosure was about 400 feet in length, the whole length of the rows of chambers would have been from 1,500 to 1,600 feet in each storey, equal to about 600 apartments. But as the number of monks is said by Hiuen-Tsang to have been more than 1,000, therefore it is concluded that there must have been other smaller monasteries.

Monastic Complex at Taradiha :

During the course of Taradih excavation, a small part of monastic complex came to light at the south-east corner of the mound. The discovery of this monastery helped us in ascertaining the accurate position and capacity of the monasteries, as it was mentioned by Hiuen-Tsang.

This monastic site is situated nearly 250 feet to the south-west of the present boundary of the Mahabodhi-temple. And just below of this complex and mound, there lies a tank, known as bathing tank at a distance of nearly 50 feet in the same direction[13] from the Great Temple. Cunningham has also mentioned that "To the south of the Bodhi tree, out side the walls, for about 10 Li, 1/2 mile, the sacred monuments were so numerous that Hiuen-Tsang found it difficult to describe them". Hiuen-Tsang himself has mentioned in this context that "still further to the south there was another tank which was made by Indra,[14] when Buddha, after he had attained perfect intelligence, formed a wish to bathe. This may be identified with the tank of '*Ghosal Chak*' or "bathing tank,"[15] as it is now called which lies 300 feet to the south-west of the *Buddhokar* but is to the south west of the Great Temple.[16] However the location of this monastery (discovered) is exactly same as mentioned by Hiuen-Tsang himself.[17]

Now this monastic structure unearthed so far showed two or three phases. The first upper phase which appeared during layer (2) and (3) looks over laping one wall to other, and similarly got much hazard, yet on the relative findings one can ascertain the period of upper structure to Pala period which was disturbed either by modern or mediaveal structure.

Further, more trenches were taken up in order to find more detailed about this structural complex in the second and third seasons of excavation. It is however extended towards the south-west direction in the same alignment i.e. TRH II, V, IX and, still excavation is going on in order to complate its plan and other details which could not be exposed perhaps due to limited nature of excavation. However we could succeed in finding the remains of courtyard, platform, soakjar, drains, prayer hall, and Cells (smaller rooms to live the monks). The platform which was made in a decorative manner was erected in a part of prayer hall, with bricks and found during the last or lowest phase of the structure, which survived during layer (3) to (5). All the constructions were made by burnt bricks. In the lowest phase, exposed so far, the size of the utilized brick, was $-37\times26\times6$ Cms. While in the later phases we got sizes of bricks $-26\times20\times5$ Cms. and $332\times26\times5$ Cms. respectively. In preparation of these structures mud mortar was used as the binding material. It seems that this complex collapsed by some natural causes like earthquake etc. Its complete picture can be provided if the whole plan of the structure will be exposed down to the lowest leval.

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7

INSCRIPTIONS, SEALS AND SEALINGS

A. INSCRIPTIONS

The epigraphy is one of the important sources for building up the early history of India. It provides a good deal of the accurate information. The value of inscriptions for the history of ancient India has been fully recognised by all. The connected accounts of several periods in early Indian history which has now become possible to write is the out come of patient and minute study of inscriptions chiefly. The epigraphic records have provided material for the major part of what is already known about the achivements of ancient Indians. This is also the case with the history of Bodhgaya. Facts of political and cultural importance can be gleaned through it. A study of Bodhgaya inscriptions furnishes us with information of considerable significance like the prevalance of Buddhism with casual references to political and cultural importance.

The earliest epigraphic records discovered so far at Bodhgaya is lying in the form of rails, bearing the inscriptions of Queen Kurangi, wife of king Indragnimitra ; another piece has on it the inscription of Nagadevi wife of king Brahmamitra. Several kings bearing 'Mitra' at the end of their names are known from here and they have been placed after the fall of the Kanvas.[1] In the later phases numerous inscriptions including Epigraphs on rocks, stone slabs and pillars, stone and metal images, terracotta bead (inscribed unearthed from TRH. Bodhgaya) and terracotta seals and sealings along with

some plaques have been found. It must however be pointed out that, as the history of Mahabodhi temple is often intimately associated with some other sites of Bodhgaya, many inscriptions along with seals & sealings discovered also throw welcome light on the problems of its history. We will deal here with those inscriptions, which have been discovered in and around Bodhgaya either by means of Excavations or explorations.

Text—1 (a) :

"*Ayyaye Kurangiye danam*"

(Gift of the noble (lady) Kurangi).

Afore said inscription is the most valuable part of the stone railings and the same inscription is engraved on the fourteenth stone Rails. On the last and the fifteenth rail consisted the following inscription of the same donour—*i.e.*

Text—1 (b) :

"*Ayaye Kurangiye danam*"

(Donated by the Noble lady and matron Kurangi).

Text—2 (a) :

"*Rano Imdagimitrasa pasada Chetika Sirimaye danam*"[1]

(The gift of Sirima a female donour from the Indraghimitra prasada[2]).

Text—2 (b) :

"*Rano Kosiki putrasa Imdagimitrasa Pajavatiye Jiva putraye Kuramgiye danam : Raja pasado Chetika Sirimaye danam.*"

(Gift of Kurangi wife of Indragnimitra, Kurangi being mother of living sons—Gift of Sirima, the female donour from the kings palace.)

Here Barua takes the word Chetika (Prakrit-Ceyaga) as meaning 'a donour' and Sirima as the name of that female donour. In that case these two inscriptions which are translated as above.

Barua's translation make the inscriptions cumbrous and we do not find any other inscription with the epithet donour before the name of the donour. The word 'Chetika' may also mean (a maid servant'). But in that case 'Sirima' would be a maid servant with whom it is not likely that the queen will make a joint donation (as the No. 2). More over we have got 15 other inscriptions of Kurangi in which she makes the donation herself alone. Why should she make a joint donation, where as in the first inscription above 'Sirima' is allowed to make an independent donation ? So it is better that these two inscriptions should be interpreted, as Kurangi was donating the structures to (the goddess) Sirima of the Raja-Prasada-Chaitya.

But even the then the word 'Raja-Prasada-Chaitya' raises some other difficulties. This will mean that there was a goddess Sirima inside some structure here known as Raja-Prasada-Chaitya. Scholars can not think of any royal palace here or a Chaitya close to it. Some therefore took the word to mean, "The Chaitya of noble palace" like the word—Rajhamsa." All these difficulties disappear if we take the word to mean what 'Chaitya Prasada in the Ramayana means. Both the words may—mean' a Prasada (temple) made in form of a Chaitya' or Chaitya made in the form of a Prasada' (temple)'. The Hindus called their temples 'Prasada' and the Buddhists called their shrines 'Chaityas' and there was some difference in their shapes too.[3]

Prasada-Chaitya thus may refer to a Hindu shrine made in the form of a Chaitya. The word 'Raja' in Raja-Prasada-Chaitya' may not mean here' a king or noble' but the name of a God, like Dharmaraja, Devaraja etc. We shall have then to assume that the Railing on which these inscriptions occur covered a sort of a temple of a God named Raja, in which there was also a figure of Sirima. Scholars can not think of a temple or any other Chaitya here in the Sunga period other than the *Vajrasanagandha-Kuti*.

The difficulty will be solved if we look to Buddhas activities at Bodhgaya. We know from Mahavagga that after

attaining Buddhahood, the Buddha sat at the foot of a 'Rajayatna' which has been explained by the Buddhists as a tree. There is a tree called 'Rajadana,' which could not have been converted into 'Rajayatana.' Thus the Buddha must have sat at the foot of a structure known as 'Ayatana' (temple or Shrine) of Raja which corresponds to the 'Raja-Prasada-Chaitya' of the inscriptions. Thus the Tripitaka as well as Kurangi's inscriptions clearly prove that there was in the Sunga period a shrine near the *Vajrasanagandhakuti*, which contained an image of Sirima and of a God named (Dharma) Raja.[4] Sri or Lakshmi was one of the fourteenth wives of Dharma as the Puranas say.

Text—3 (a) :

"Amoghsa danam".

(The gift of Amogha).

Text—3 (b) :

"Bodhi Rakhitasa Taba-panakasa danam."

(The gift of Bodhiraksita, a men of Tamraparni (Ceylon).

These two short inscriptions on Rail Bars, are of the usual forms that has been made so faimilar by the similar records at Bhahut and Sanchi.

Text—4 :

"....Mata.....P(ita).....rito."

(.....caused to be made for the benefit of mother and father).

This small inscription has been found on the covering stone slab of the old Diamond throne, which appear to be coeval with the building of the great temple are the much injured record of single line carved around the upper edge of the outer Vajrasan. After analysis it can be said only that the letters certainly belong to the INDO-SCYTHIAN or early Gupta period.[5] The inscriptions on the Vajrasana throne at the back of the temple show that the next temple was built during the rule of the Indo-scythian princess.

Text—5 :

"Karito yatra Vjrasana brihad-gandha kuti-prasada."[6]

(made where.....in the Vajrasana Great Gandhakuti temple).

It is carved on the inner face of the coping of the southern railing. Gandhakuti was the name given to the house in which Buddha had lived and later it has been applied to any temple in which an image of Buddha enshrined. In fact it is taken to be a contemporary record describing the erection of the great temple itself in the reign of the Indo-Scythian king Huviska in the 2nd century A.D.

In spite of the aforesaid inscription some other contemporary inscriptions have been unearthed, which can be hardly trace out. In this context Cunningham and Bhagwan Lal have applied their efforts to sort out them and to reconstruct with a view that it can be read and translated. However, Cunningham mentions as below :—

"The inscription on the inner side of the coping stone offers another corrobration of the early date of the period of the later Indo-Scythians, or early Guptas. Many of the latters of this inscription are very faint and the copy is taken from a paper impression with the letters restored. Some of them may be doubtful, but the greater part of them seem pretty certain."[7] He gives the reading of the letters as they appear to him.

Text—6 :

"Karito Yantra Vajrasana vrihad Gandhakuti Prasada murddha vriddhi sarasataissa dhrili prakarmmye Punalamdikah tagekana

ridapratuda cha d.....viharmi chandrakka tara kam Bhagwate Buddha yodde gara danena ghu ka Prudimah Swakarisahamrisade vaga.....Bha lita pratisa madhane.....ddratimayam cha Prati hamghrita Pradpargu sata dinemi paraine karitah viharepi Bhagwaterotya Buddha Pratima.....

Next one which is more damaged and hardly can be read :—

Text—7:

".....''Nagradipakshaya Siti.....kah.....Viharaipi .....Subha.....Kari.....bha.....viha..... .....itam davaga pradesi chatarana.....vibharami... .....paghu.....ka isyah Payomaya masante madhuram anye sitpante dine purvvam cha Prahata kakshetu matpaditamtade tatsarvvam yaumarya Punya Prachite Sambharam tana mitrsh.....[8]

In Cunningham's opinion the names of Vajrasana Gandhakuti and vihara and also Bhagavata Buddha and the statue of Buddha (Buddha Pratima) in the first line, "All of which will last as long as the moon, Sun and Stars" (Chandrarkkatarakam). We see also the mention of clearified butter for lamps (ghritapradipo).

The second of these coping inscription is very short one, and is probably, as suggested by Rajendra Lal, only the work of a pilgrim recording a gift of money (Tanka) apparently for the supply of lamps. It is rather rudely engraved. As it can not be of later date than the fourth or fifth century A.D., the coping is still *in situ*, while the record was cut upon it. These inscription belonged to Gupta Brahmi in character, which was also read by Rajendra Lal, having the same idea.

According Cunningham "The most valuable parts of the old Railing are its inscriptions, as their characters prove beyond all doubt that the railing must be as old as the time of Aśoka." And as we learn from Hiuen-Thsang that Aśoka surrounded the Bodhi tree with a stone enclosure ; so it was concluded by Cunningham that the Railing which now exist must have formed part of Aśoka's work.

The discovery of an illegible votive inscription, on the narrow side of its upper surface, in early Brahmi script intended to record a gift of the throne. In spite of such unassailable archaeological, evidence Brua B.M. refuses to give any credit to Aśoka for any constructional activity at

Bodhgaya and adds, "Even it is difficult to ascribe to his (Aśoka's) piety the erection of the smaller Shrine referred to by the Chinese Pilgrim (Hiuen-Tsang). The only smaller shrine which may be believed to have existed and stood infront of the original Bo-tree as any thing like a shrine is the Diamond throne temple.....This earlier shrine was not brought into being by king Aśoka but by some such personage as Kurangi, the matron and lady Kurangi, to whose munificence the ancient stone railing was mainly due. The diamound throne temple still exists inside the present temple without its covering roof and with its four pillars broken and damaged.[9]"

Obviously, B.M. Barua is so much influenced by a set of fifteen pillar inscriptions of Kuramgi and two on coping stones[10] that he even ignores positive Archaeological evidences suggesting Asokas association with the temple. In fact, under neath the Vajrasan was discovered a brick platform, arnamented on its side with figure of men and lion, and this was certainly a post Vajrasana construction. Inside the masonary of the brick platform, in the middle of its front face, was found a ball of stiff earth or clay which when broken, yielded a number of Gold and silver objects, gems and pearls including a hollow golden amulet initating the obverse motife of a coin of Huviska on both its faces, and five punch marked coins[11]. However the Aśoka Vajrasana was provided with a platform and the donations of Kurangi seemingly relate to this second phase of construction.'[12]

Text—8 : Image Inscription of the Bodhgaya

(I) *"Maharajasya Tr* (i) *Kama* (1) *asya S* (*am*) 60 4 *grī* (3) *di* 5 ?? *Purvvaya bh* (i) *–ksu—Vinayadharasya Viharasya Sadhevihari vita.....ksu....."*

(II) *"Amatya—dhurvihare Suakena Samartha Sa'* ????? *Sailika bodhisatva—patima Siharatha pratisthapayati* 2 (.) *Upasikaya arthadharma—Sahayetiye dhat.* ?? *ksu.....ye Sarva....."*

(III) .....*(sa) hayata dharma kathi Kena ?? ta (.) Imena Kusala—mulena mata pitrna (m) Pujaye bhavatu Upadh.....Jage.....*"

(IV) .....*ye ? vva.....(,).*"

(The Samvat 64, the 5th day of the 3rd Summer month, during the reign of the great king Trikamala, prior to this, the fellow monk who was the up holder of the vinaya discipline.....set up on his own strength two lion vehicled stone images of the Bodhi Sattava. With the aid of the Buddhist lay woman, who was helper of the noble cause of piety..... (something) was done by a preacher of the law. Let the merit springing from this act of piety by the share of matter and father (to begin with), of the preceptor .....[13]).

The constructional activities mainly of an additional nature were going on in the 2nd Ist century A.D. which is proved by the discovery of the aforesaid inscription on the pedestal of a statute of the Buddha found near a small ruined temple close to the south gate of railing of the great temple.[14] This statue apperantly belonged to this period as is obvious from the Indo-Scythian style of letters and the style of sculptures. The inscription is dated in the samvat year 64, the fifth day of the 3rd summer month. The year 64 is probably of the Saka—era, which is within the reign period of Huviska. The present inscription is badly damaged, and the donor's name is hardly legible. He was however, a maharaja (afeudatry king Huviska of the Kushna) who, according to Cunningham, "may, therefore, have been agent employed by the Indo-Scythian king Huvishka in building the great temple. His name was either Tukamala or Turamala.[15]

Now we proceed to the inscription of Mahanam, dated 269 (—588-89), which was discovered by Cunningham and Beglar, does not refer to any king. It records the installation of the Buddhist temple. And the Bodhgaya image inscription of Mahanam records the presentation of the statue by a Sthavira named (Mahanam), which are copied as follow :—

Text—9 : Buddha Gaya Inscription of Mahanaman The Year 269.

1. *Om (11) Vyapto yen=a Prameyah Sakala-Sasi-ruca Sarvvatah sat (t) va—dhatuh ksunnah Pasanda-Yodha's =Saugati=Patha=rudhas = tarkka= Sastrabhiyuktah sampurnno.*

2. *dharma—kosah Prakrti-ripu—hrtah sadhito Lokabhutyai Sastuh Sakya-aikava (ba) ndhar=jjayati cirataram tad = yasas-sara—tamuharm" Nairodhim Subhabhavana.*

3. *m=anusrtah Samsara—Samklesa—jin=Maitreyasya kare vimukti—vasita yasy=abdhuta vyakrta I nirvan avasareea yena caranou drstau muneh.*

4. *Pavanau 1 Payad=vah sa manindra—Sasna-dhara stutyo Maha-kasyapah 11 Samyukt-agamino visuddha rajasah sat (t) v-anukamp-o dyatah sisya.*

5. *Yasya sakrd=vicerur=amalam Larnk-acal opatyakam Leshyah Sila-gun-anvitas=sa satasah sisya-prasisyah kramaj=jatas=tunga-narendra.*

6. *Vamsa—tilakah prostrijya rajya—Sriyam" Dhayan oday=ahita-hitah subh-asubha-vivekrd=vihata-mohah saddharmm—atula-vihavo Bhavo va (ba) bhua.*

7. *Saramanas=tatah" Rahul—akhyas=ca zaechisya Upaseno yakir=yatah Mahanama karmad=evam= upssenas=tato=Prah vatsalyam Saran—a—*

8. *gatasya satatam dinasya vaisesikam vyapat—sayaka-sautati-kasata dhrter=arttasya e=apatyakam | kru rasy=ahita-karinah pravitatam va(ba) ndhor=yataha—*

9. *bhavatah evam sac—carit—odbhavena yasasa yasy= aeikam bhutalam" Amradvip—adhivasi Prthu-kula jaladhis=tasya sisyo mahiyan.*

10. *Lanka dvipa—prasutah Prahita miratah San-Mahanamanama | ten=oceair—vvo (bbo) dhimande Sasi-karadhavalah Sarvvato mandapena | .*

11. *kautah Prasada esa Sarmava-va (bh) la-jayinah karito lake—sastuh" Vyapagata—Visya-sneho hata—timiera—dasah Pradifavad=a-sangah.*

12. *Kusalen=anena jano vo (bo) dhi-sukhum=auuttaram bhajatam" yavad=dhvant-apahari Pravitata—kiranah sarvato bhati bhasavan=yavat=Purnno=mvu (mbu)—*

13. *rasih Pharni—Pharna-kutilair=Urmmi—Cakkarais= Samantat yavac=c=Endradhivaso vividha-mani-sila Carusrnggarn Sumerah soba-adhyam.*

14. *tavad=etada=bhavanam=Uru—muneh sasvatatvam= Prayatu" Samvat 200609 Caitra su di 7".*

Translation

Om ! Victorious for a very long time is that doctrine replate with fame, of the Teacher, the chief kinsman of the Saybeyas, by which, Lustrous as the full-moon, the inscrutable primary substance of existance has been pervaded in all direction ; by which the warrious, who are heretics, obstactive of the path of beautified have been Brokan to pieces, being assiled with weapon logic ; (and) by which the whole treasure of religion, that had been stolen by the enemy which is original in nature, has been recovered for the welfare of man kind !

2. May he, Maha-kasyapa, who is worthy of praise, protect you,—he who observed the precepts of (Buddha) the chief of saints ; who practised that auspicious habit of abstract meaditation which is of the nature of a trains, who over came the anguished of successive stactes of existance ; whose wonderful subjugation of the Passions in final emancipation (is to be) desplayed in the hand of Maitraya ; and by whom the two pure feet of (Buddha) the saint were be held at the time of attaining Nirvana !

4. His disciples, endowed with a connected tradition of doctroine, purified as to (there) emotions, (and) active in compassion for existing beings, roamed at on time over the stainless country at the feet of the mountains of Lakha ; and in succession from them there were born, in hundreds, disciples and disciples', possessed of the virtue of (good) charactor, who, without the glory of (actual) sovereignty, were the ornaments of a lofty race of kings.

6. Then there was the Sarmana bhava, whose welfare was effected by the development of abstract meditation ; who discriminated between good and evil ; who destroyed error ; (end) who possessed and unequalled wealth of true religion.

7. And his disciple (was) he who had name of Rahula ; after whom (there came) the ascetic Upasana (I) ; then in succession (there was) Mahanaman (I) (and) after him another Upasena (II), whose special characteristic of affection, of the kind that is felt towards off spring for any distressed man who came to him for protection, and for any effected person whose fortitude had been destroyed by the continious flight of the errows of adversity, —extended in conformity with the disposition of Kinsman, (even) to any cruel man who might seek to do (him) harm ; (and by whose fame, arising from good actions, the whole world was thus completely filled).

9. His disciple, greater (even then himself), (is) he who has the excellent name of Mahanaman (II) ; an inhabitant of Amardvipa ; a very ocean of a mighty family ; born in the island of Lanka ; delighting in the welfare of others, by him this beautiful mansion of the teacher of mankind, who over came the power of (to gad) Samara, —dazzling white as the rays of the moon, with an open pavilion on all sides,—has been caused to be made at the exalted Bodhimanda.

11. By means of this appropriate (action), let mankind, freed from attachment to worldly things ; having the condition of (mental) darkness dispelled ; (and), like (the flame of) a torch, having no adhesion (to material objects), enjoy the supreme happiness of perfect wisdom.

12. As long as the sun, the dispellar of darkness, shines in all directions with diffused rays ; as long as the ocean (is) full on all sides with its circles of waves that are curved like the hoods of hooded snakes and as long as (mountain) Sumero, the abode of (the god) Indra, has its summits made beautiful by various jewelled slabs, in such a way as to be full of lustre, —so long let this temple of the great saint attain the conditions of being everlasting !

14. The year 200 (and) 60 (and) 9 ; (the month) Caitra ; the bright fortnigh ; the day seven.[16]

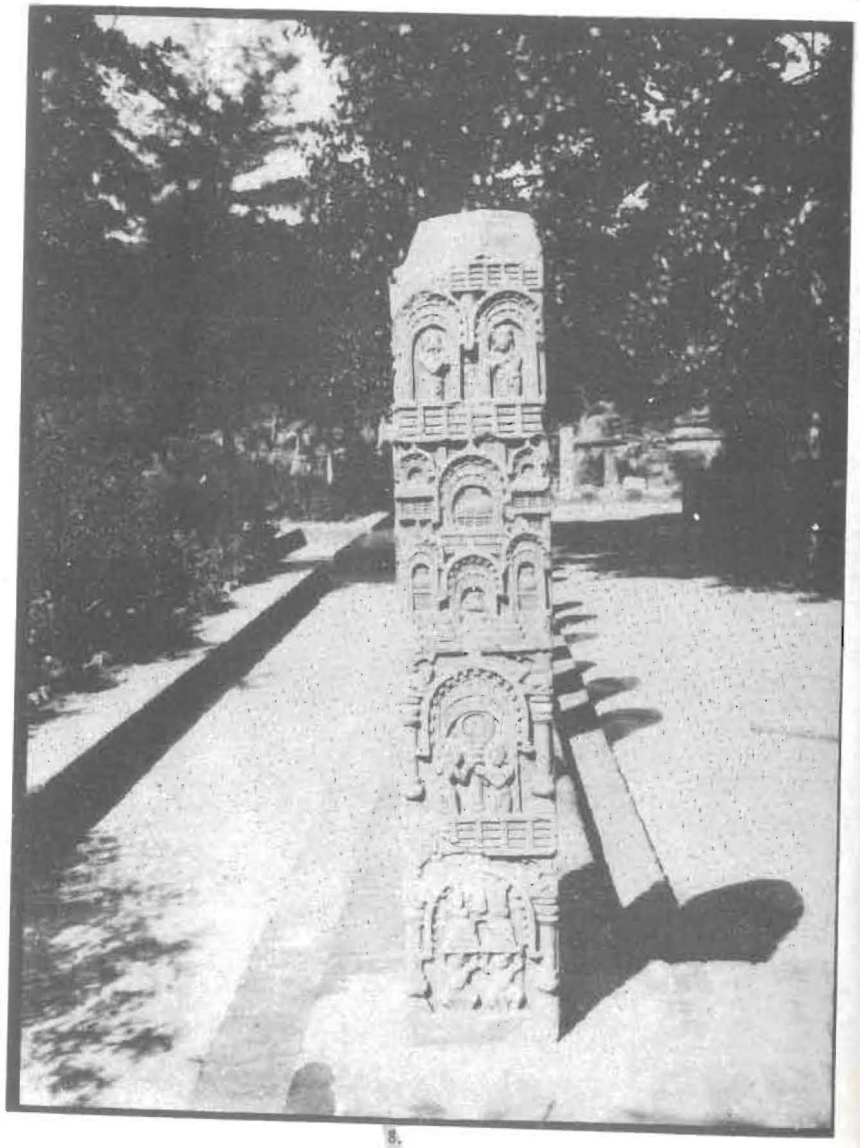
Text 10 : Image Inscription of Mahanaman :

"Om Deya Dharmmo=yam Sakya-bhiksoh Amradvi-pavasi—Sthavira—Mahanamasya ('') Yad=atra Punyam tad=bhavatu Sarvva-sat (t) vanam=anuttara—Jnan-avaptaye=stu ('').

Translation

Om ! This (is) the appropriate religious gift of the Sokya Bhiksu, the Sthavira Mahanaman, a resident of Amradvipa. Whatever religious merit (there is) this (act) let it be for the acquisition of supreme knowledge by all sentient beings.[17] After (the-ir) Acharya and Upadhyaya.

The famous Bodhgaya Inscription of Mahanama was engraved on a stone tablet in Samvat 269, which interprated in terms of the Gupta era, correspond to A.D. 588—89. Its characters belong to northern class of alphabets. Its language is sanskrit ; and, except for the opening symbol representing Om, and for the date at the end, it is in verse throughout. The stone tablet appears to have been 'originally set in a socket about three inches deep, and morticed at the sides into building. Mahanama, the author of the inscription has been introduced in it as Mahanama II ; an inhabitant of Amradvipa ; a very ocean of a mighty family born in the is Land of Lanka, delighting for the welfare of others. Upsena II flourished in succession to Mahanama I, who in his turn came after the saintly Upasena I, The last named Sthavira Rahula in seniorship, while Rahula, himself was just **a** desciple of the Sramana Bhava. And Bhava saw the light of the day in long time of succession of descipless and desciples' desciples, born in hundreds, all up holding the tradition of the Samyuktagama of Samyukta-bhanka school and tracing their descent back to Maha-kasyapa, worthy of praise.[18] The record is composed in high praise of an act of merit done by Mahanama II, in erecting a beautiful temple of the Buddha with an open pavilion on all sides at the exalted Bodhi-manda or the site of the Bo-tree.[19]



8.

Along with this we may take into our consideration another inscription which records the presentation of a statue of the Buddha by a Sthavira named Mahanama. Its characters are of precisely the same type with those of the preceding inscription of Mahanaman. Its language is sanskrit and written in prose. Mahanama of this inscription, precisely like that of the preceding one, is described as an inhabitant of Amradvipa (in the island of Lanka).

We have the dedication of two other Buddha images at Bodhgava by three other Buddhist monks of Ceylon, Dharmadasa, Dharmagupta and Damshtrasena, who appear to have come on pilgrimage to the holy site together with Sthavira Mahanama II of Amradvipa. One image was jointly dedicated by Dharmagupta and Damshtrasena both of whom are described as *Tishyamaratirthavasika*, "residents of *Tishyamartirtha*."

Tishyamratirtha is evidently a place in the island of Lanka, and Damshtrasena too, is just a Singhalese name. We are aware that the provence of the Buddha image bearing the inscription of Dharmodasa is unknown. But there can be little doubt that like Damshtrasena, Dharmadasa is a Singhalese Buddhist name. Further, the same wording of the inscription and the same characters can not but lead one to imagine that Bodhgaya is the place where the image was installed by Dharmadasa.

Pala Inscriptions :

There is an almost complete dearth of Inscriptions during the 7th or 8th centuries. But with the rise of the Buddhist kings of the Pala dynasty in the beginning of the 9th century, the inscriptions are pretty numerous, as the Pala rulers were devout Buddhists and they granted toleration to all other sects. So far as Bodhgaya is concerned, "the great mass of the scultures, "says Cunningham belongs to the period of the Pala kings there are numberless figures of the Buddha Sakyamuni sitting under the Bodhi-tree. After all the figures of Padmapani (Bodhi-Sattava) are also numerous. Of the founder Gopala and his descendants insriptions have been

illustrated well with plates in Cunningham's "Mahabodhi" Page No. 63 and Plates XXVIII. There is one inscription recording the dedication of a statue of the Buddha during the reign of Sri Gopaladeva.[20] According to Taranath testimony"[21] he built a temple at Nalanda, not far from Otantapura (modern Udantpuri) or Bihar. His reign has been fixed on pretty sure grounds in the beginning of the 9th century, say 800 to 825 A.D. The Inscription, which was exhumed at Mahabodhi, simply records the dedication of a statue. There is another inscription which records the installation of a Mahadeva—Chaturmukha (Siva-Brahma) in Bodhgaya temple by a stone named Ujjavala in the 26th year of the reign of king Dharmapala, the son and successor of Gopala-Deva. One of the remaining inscriptions happens to be a record of the time of king Narayanapala deva, who was fourth in descent from Gopala. Mahipaladeva a king of the same dynasty, is evlogized in an inscription, dated in the 10th year of his reign' as Parama-Bhattaraka, Parama-Saugata, Sriman Mahipala-deva, "the supreme sovereign the preminent Buddhist, the fortunate Mahipala-deva.[22] There is yet another inscription on a long slab, which is a short record of the reign of king Ramapala-deva, whom the Tibetan historian Taranath mentions as the grand father of the last Pala king, named Yakshapala.[23]

The inscriptions of the Pala's, which have unearthed from various places of Bodhgaya and around are clearly shown in the texts, "Select Inscriptions of Bihar" of Professor R. K. Choudhary, But Cunningham's "Mahabodhi" provides the study of the Palas inscriptions in a chronological order, with illustrious plates, and its brief introductions. That first inscription of the Pala's which was exhumed at Mahabodhi, simply records the dedication of a statue by the founder of the dynasty known as Sri Gopala-deva and the next inscription of his son and successor Dharma-pala records the dedication of an image of the four faced Mahadeva, whose text and translation was published by first by Dr. Rajendra Lal.[24] By this inscription we are aware of the date, but the name of month has omitted in the text, yet it has enabled to fix a

corresponding with A.D. 850, which is early reign of Dharmapal. Next is an inscription of Narayana Pal Deva, who was the fourth in descent from Gopala. The record is dated in Samvat 9 (of his reign), or A.D. 933, on the 5th of Vaisakh sudi.

Further we get a part of long inscription of three lines on the base of a statue. The text and translation of this records is prefer red by Pandit Bhagwan Lal, which provides the Buddhist creed[25], having no date. It was further corrected by Dr. Rajendra Lal.

Other inscription of the same dynasty has been found by Cunningham which belonged to Mahipala, dated in the 10th year of his reign, *i.e.* c. 1010 A.D.[26] The valuable part of this inscription is contained in the following words of the second live :—

> *"Parama Bhattaraka, parama Saugata, Sriman Mahipala-Deva pravardhm na, Vijaya raje dasame Samvatsare".*

(During the prosperous and victorious reign of the supreme sovereign, the pre eminent Buddhist, the fortunate Mahipala-Deva.....in the 10th year). Here the term parama Saugata distinctly declares that Mahipala-Deva himself was a follower of Buddha. It is perhaps worthy of Notice that the great temple at Nalanda was repaired in the 11th year of the reign of Mahipala.

Among the Pala's inscriptions next come to a short undated inscription of Rama Pal-Deva on a long Slab. The exact position of this king in the list of Pala's king is not known. But Cunningham has placed him after Mahipala, so, the date of his reign may be C.960 to 980 A.D.[27]

The last of the Pala's inscriptions belonged to the fortunate Sthira-Pala, and his younger brother, the fortunate Vasanta-Pala, having renewed religion completely in all its parts have raised a tower (Saila) with an inner chamber, garbhakuti, and eight-large niches in Samvat 1083, the 11th day of Pausha.

This inscription was found at the large brick mound called chokandi, at Sarnath. The text of this inscription has been found in Vol. XI ; P. 182, of the Archaeological Survey" where found in term "garbha-kuti." Actually this term should be "Gandha-kuti," as Cunningham has also read and said" I suspect that "garbha-kuti" must have been an erroneous reading for "Gandha-kuti.[28]

In the last of Cunningham', expeditions and explorations a long inscription on a black slab was discovered at the Mahant's gateway ; A very good fascimile of this inscription has already been published by Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra along with the a text and translation, which is dated on the 5th of Sravana in the year 15 of the reign of king Tunga, of the Rastrakutas race. It is a long rambling farrogo of the praises of the king and his immediate predecessors, ending in the simple statement of the erection of a "Gandha-kuti," like unto a flight of stupe to heaven." There is no date, but from the style of the letters it can be estimated between 10th or 11th century A.D. As Cunningham has suggested.

Burmese Inscriptions :

Among the inscriptions, discovery of the two Burmese records are most interesting and important as well. These records bear the mission of the Burma king in the 11th century A.D. towards the reconstruction of Mahabodhi temple and its establishment. The larger one of the inscription is found in one of the walls (fixed) of the Mahant's residence, which is carved on Black stone in Burmese script whose plate is published in Archaeological Survey, Volume, III, Plate XXXII and is read and translated by four scholars like Ratna Pala (Ceylon), Colonel Burney, Hla Oung, a Burmese scholar and D.K. Brua.

Comparing to these translations provided by those scholars we can to the conclusion that Mahabodhi original temple was built by Aśoka, on the spot where Buddha had eaten rice and milk, and when this temple was ruined, a new temple was built by a 'Penthagugyi' (Maha Vpasika). The temple, when it was

repaired was restored by king 'Thado-Mang or king Sado. In the last we get the dating, when the work was over and the personage who had done the work ? i.e. At the request of high priest varadasi the king (lord of 100,000 pyus) deputed prince (Pyutasing—Pyu—Sakheng, and the minister Ratha, who accordingly came to India for the purpose. The work was begun on Friday, the 10th of the waxing moon of Pyatho in the Sakka-raj year 441, (Friday 6th Dec. 1079), and was finished on Sunday, the 8th of the waxing moon of Tazoungmon, in the Sakkaraj year 448 (Sunday, 18th October, 1086 A.D.).

These inscriptions however show that Mahabodhi temple was restored during the period of six years and 10 months. In the course of time two minor inscriptions belonging to Burmese script was also came to light, one inscription possessing on metallic umbrella discovered from Bodhgaya and other on a brick, or which the names of some masons was also put up unlike Gopapala, Dharma Singha etc, which is illustrated in plate XXIX in *Mahabodhi* by Sir A. Cunninghum.

Chinese Inscriptions :

Though cultural contact between India and China had started very earlier, but continuous and fraquent intercourse between India and China started during 7th century A.D. and as we find by the Chinese records. This intercourse was no doubt stimulated by the friendly reception accorded to Chinese pilgrims Hwen-Thsang[29] (A.D. 629 to 642) by the great Buddhist king Harshavardhana. Hence the Buddhist shrines at Bodhgaya visited by a good many Chinese pilgrims in which Yuan-Chwang was more energetic, who stayed Bodhgaya for four years[30] and returned to China and came back again (in A.D. 665) to India and once more visited Mahabodhi and the Vajrasan throne.[31]

The intercourse between these two countries was pastially resumed during the tenth century under the Pala Buddhist kings. In the time of Mahipal A.D. 1000 to 1040, numerous Chinese pilgrims visited Mahabodhi and set up memorials of

their visits, some of which have discovered during the course of the excavations around Bodhgaya.

These Chinese inscriptions which were scattered heither and theather were found and traced very distinctly by A. Cunningham and Mr. Beglar. These collected Chinese inscriptions were further translated by H.A. Giles,[32] a well known Chinese scholar. These are however published in Cunninghams Mahabodhi with their texts and translations whose plates (photographs) are given in Cunninghams Mahabodhi plate Nos. :—XVIII and XXX.

The first Chinese record which was engraved on the stone slab by the great. Sung empire, through the Buddhist priest I-Ching and the novice I-lin to spread over the throne of the Buddha by gold-embroidered kashaya and to erect a stone stupa as well. It was recorded on a day of the fourth moon of the sixth year of Divine favour,[33] when the Upadhya Pien-Cheng was chief teacher. In the next records same subjects are provided by the same king and date. In the 3rd inscription we get the Buddhist priest commissioned through the Sung dynasty and that priest Hui-wen is said to procead to Magadha to erect a Pagoda beside the Bodhimanda, the Diamond throne which was recorded on 19th day of the 1st moon of the 2nd year of "Ming-Tao".[34]

Later inscription which was found by Mr. Beal records that Chi-I, a priest of the Great HAN country, having first vowed to encourage 30,000 men to prepare themselves by their conduct for a birth in heaven, for this to distribute in charity 30,000 books[35] relating to a heavenly birth, then in company with others travelled through India, arrived at Magadha, where he gazed upon the diamond throne and other sacred vestiges of his religion. It was also vowed to further continue his travels for the same purpose, along three of his companions named as Kwei-Tseih, Chi-I and Kwang-Fung.[36].

Inscription of Asokavalla :

The history of Bodhgaya after the Palas is one of decadence of its glorious life. The Indian Archaeologists have brought

to light three inscriptions of the reign of king Asokavalla *Sapadalaksha* (Siwalik), which is dated in terms of a year of Buddha era, and remaining two in those of two years of the expired reign of king Lakshmanasena of Bengal. The inscription dated in the year 1813[37] of the Buddha era contains a clear statement to the effect that at the time when it was written, the religion of Buddha fell into decay. This record however hints at the decadence of Buddhism at Bodhgaya for want of royal patronage after termination of the reign of the Sena Kings of Bengal. The iconoclastic fury of Islam must have a terrible effect on the shrines of Gaya region, and particularly on Buddhism[38] with the result that a time came when, there being no Buddhists to look after their own shrines and worship at Bodhgaya, the Brahmins of Gaya had to do their work even by going out of their jurisdiction. The sin of greed brought down curse on these Brahmins. Thus Gaya ceased to be a land of plenty and prosperity, and its inevitable consequence was that its Brahmins became dependent for their livelihood entirely on an income from the pilgrims.

These three inscriptions of Asokavall occurred in the ruins of Mahabodhi itself during the course of excavation and Reinnovation, by the different scholars like one by Mr. Hathorne, next by Mr. Beglar and the last by A. Cunningham,[39] which is sorted out and arranged in the plate XXVIII A, of Cunningham's Mahabodhi. It consists of 13 lines of Bengali characters and was translated by Pandit Bhagwan Lal Indraji.

In spite of the above inscriptions some other inscriptions on the various materials, icons have yielded from the Taradiha site Bodhgaya. Most of those icons belonged to Palas and Guptas. And those are kept now in the office of the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Bihar, Patna, with a view to decipher and publishing them.

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31. Beal, *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. X, p. 209.
32. Cunningham, *op. cit* , p. 68.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
34. *Ibid.*
35. Beal, *op. cit.*, p. 193.
36. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
38. Brua, B.M., *op. cit.*, p. 156.
39. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

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(B) SEALS AND SEALINGS

During the course of Archaeological operations around Bodhgaya various antiques are being traced, yielded from various sites, excavated or explored. It has been proved by the Archaeological findings that Bodhgaya region is quite rich in this context. We find numerous antiquities inscribed and uninscribed coming out of the sites, in which inscriptions, coins, seals and sealings, are most important to know the history of the time beings.

The inscribed materials are most particular and helpful for the purpose. So after discussing inscriptions on stone we may study the seals and sealings which have been found during the excavation and exploration belonging to excavated ruins of Mahabodhi temple, Sujata Kutir, Taradih, Amar Sinh's fort and Mocharin, by the Indian European Japnese and Burmese explorers.

Usually very great numbers of seals and sealings are found in every Buddhist site and in small number at every old city. By far the greater number are of clay, both burnt and unburnt, but several in metal and a few in ivory.[1] According to the rules laid down in the Buddhist scriptures, the monks might have seals of copper, Brass, bell-metal, ivory or horn, but not of gold, Silver, or precious stones.[2] In one of the seals, founded here having the subject engraved on the seal was limited to a "circle with two deer on opposite sides, and below them the name of the Vihar," with short inscription of two lines, i.e. "Sri Saddharma", in the upper line and naming" Gandha-Kuti" in the second line as the Temple to which the owner was attached.[3]

For the next example, it is the seals of lay men's, possessing many varieties, for one of its kind, the kings may be credited, who did not and engraved their names below. We can classify such kinds of seals and sealings as founded from here are as below.[4]

(A) Seal of grey clay, which bears the inscription and its characters of the 1st or 2nd century B.C. as "*Mokhali-kasa.*" Here according to Cunningham the last letter is doubtful.

The name seems to have reference to the powerful tribe of the *Maukharis*, if so, this might be the earliest record which has been found of them.

(B) It is a round sealing in black clay with half lotus flower, above the name of "Kumara." The character belongs to 5th or 6th century A.D.

(C) It is a round clay sealing of a mediaeval seal bearing the name of the "*Rajni-Sri-Soma-Tula.*"

(D) It is an oblong sealing of black clay, bearing the name of "*Kasaprakshita*", in mediaeval letters, for *Kasyapa-Rakshita.*

The sketches of many of the principle seals found from the excavation at Bodhgaya are illustrated by Cunningham in "Mahabodhi" as is shown in his plate XXIV. Some of them are considered monastic seals and some for laymen. One is broken terracotta figure of Padamapani with, the seal of the monastery stemped near the right shoulder. It is nothing beside the well-known Buddhist creed.[5]

Other seal, which is of burnt clay and a few examples of such seal have been found. Its arrangement is exeptional. Here Buddha is represented seated with both hands in his laps, inside a pillered temple with a low roof.[6] There is no inscription or other indication of its age, but from its appearance it is said that it is not older then 10th or 11th century.[7]

Third type of seal is also an exeptional seal, as Buddha is represented seated on a throne with his hands raised before his breast in the attitude of teaching.[8] It is a burnt clay seal.

The other major type of seals are of burnt clay, where Buddha is represented in the well known attitude which he assumed when seated under the Bodhi Tree in meditation. These, therefore, are the proper seals of the different Buddhist establishments at Mahabodhi ; Most of them are in excellent preservation. The inscriptions consist of the well known Buddhist creed in Mediaeval characters.

All the seals referred to above belong to laymen, are all monastic seals, with long inscriptions which are very difficult to read as they are blurred now, and most of them are kept in the British Museum.

Some of the seals and sealings which have come up from Taradih site (Bodhgaya) are very prominent for their example. This can be classified into two groups, *i.e.* on belonging to the use of Buddhist monks and other for laymen or guilds. But all of them are of terracotta burnt clay. Some of these specimen are complate but more numbers have damaged.

For class I, we have some such seals and sealing which was, prevealent in those days to be circulated for certain values. For such examples we have some specimens unlike the seals having round face with handle and a certain diety like Padamapani[9] are engraved on it. This type of impressions are in standing pose in round carvings on burnt clay. In the same variety many other symbolic seals and sealings were discovered unlike the seals having the Ujjaini symbol, Swastika symbol and the girl representing dancing pose. These seals are of burnt clay in a long conical shaped and some having handle and round face below by which impression can be made of the same seals, sealings were yielded too from the same layers. These however are to be considered to be the later Gupta age to the Palas as its relative sequences confirm us, which may be used by laymen.

Next comes the varieties of the seals and sealings which occured from the excavated sites at Bodhgaya belong to the carvings of some Goddess and Gods, one in each seals or sealings, and the other having the inscription in two lines. Such seals are also terracotta burnt clay either having handle or conical shaped, where impression is carved in the below part of its face. The character of such inscription belong to proto Bengali. In fact inscriptions are shorter but are very ornamented in style. Some of its inscription founded in a rounded ornamented circle. These have come up from the consequent layers of later Guptas or the Palas, as the finding and other sequence say in a chronological order. These

however, might be used by the monks or for the Buddhist creed. In spite of that thousands of small seals of crude unburnt clay were also found in the various trenches of the site along with numbers of cowire shells. The remaining seals belonged to stupa seals[10] made of an extremely fine hard clay of a grey colour, in which inscription is engraved in a very inadequate spaces which has not been read. Many sealings and seals were found in an injured state. So here it is very difficult to make them deciphered. Seals and sealings discovered from Bakraur (Sujatagarh) are kept at Bodhgaya Archaeological Museum. Most of the symbols and inscribed letters have blurred away, therefore, it is not possible to provide them in present work.

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(c) *Mahavaṁsa*, " " "

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